

## **Season's greetings**

Christmas is preeminently a family feast. Despite the confusion of the times and the complexity of the issues we are facing, on Christmas the family gets its proper emphasis. For Christmas means an occasion when parents delight to watch children around a tree; it commemorates, too, the birthday of the Father's only-begotten Son into the Holy Family; it celebrates, finally, the appearance of the graciousness and loving kindness of our Saviour, whereby the human family becomes restorable to its divine heritage. The Editors of AMERICA consider its readers a sort of family. Certainly, your week-by-week interest, your gratifying expressions of confidence, your equally helpful strictures when you believe AMERICA is mistaken, all are indications of a family loyalty. Such "familiness" makes it at once easy and difficult for the Editors to say the conventional greetings of the season. The difficulty is that the perfunctory phrases have been emptied of content by unthinking usage in the secularist and commercial civilization the readers and Editors of AMERICA deplore but inhabit. May we put our Christmas greetings this way?—in the three Masses they are privileged to offer, the Jesuit Fathers of AMERICA's staff will be mindful of your families: that they may know the richly human joy, the true merriment of the happy Day; that the Holy Family may be their inspiration as they live out in their communities the ideas AMERICA tries to interpret; that God's grace may enlighten and encourage them for the tasks of the times.

## **Europe's tribute to Freedom Train**

More than once it has been said that the frantic diatribes of Soviet Russia's Andrei Vishinsky performed one good service. They startled us into examining our own American propaganda abroad, and we soon found out we were putting up a poor showing on our own behalf. In view of our deficiencies, we are moved and quite a bit humbled to see some of our European brethren more fervent in praise of the U.S. than many of us dare to be. In Holland, Dr. E. F. Schroeder, assistant editor of Amsterdam's able and hard-hitting Catholic weekly, *De Linie*, is prompted to eloquence in the November 14 issue by the inspiring Freedom Train, which has taught millions how to appreciate the written safeguards of our civic liberties; and bluntly observes that he was not paid by Washington for offering this tribute. "The difference between America and Western Europe," says Dr. Schroeder, "lies not in the presence or absence of a free economy; it lies in the concept of personal, individual freedom." In Italy the trenchant pen of A. Messineo, S. J., writing in Rome's *Civiltà Cattolica* for September 20, compares and analyzes the exchange of messages in August of this year between Pope Pius XII and President Truman. Citing the President's words on the

responsibility of the individual, Father Messineo observes:

It is sufficient to read these lines and give some thought to these assertions to see how the mind of President Truman moves within the healthful atmosphere of the genuine Christian message, openly recognizing the gradation of different spiritual values, such as Christianity has established through the centuries and the Church has ever proclaimed and defended against every attack, through the voice of her authorized representatives up to the reigning Pontiff.

These and many other like words from across the seas remind us, as American Catholics, of the part we should be taking in voicing for the whole world the highest and noblest elements in our country's ideals.

## **Soviet currency reform**

From an economic standpoint, the currency reform announced in Moscow on December 14 is a completely orthodox procedure. In the course of a modern war, a nation's money supply is vastly increased. At the same time, the goods and services for which this money might be exchanged are drastically reduced. The inevitable result is an excess of demand over supply which exerts pressure on prices and, despite artificial restraints, pushes them upward. Fundamentally, this situation can be corrected in one or both of two ways—by reducing demand and by increasing supply. The December 14 decree of the Soviet Council of Ministers represents a drastic effort to reduce demand by revaluing the ruble. The decree provides that for ten old rubles in cash the holder will receive one new ruble. Rubles held in the form of bank deposits will be exchanged at rates varying from one to three old rubles for one new ruble. If a man holds less than 3,000 rubles in bank deposits, he will receive, so to speak, one dollar for one dollar in new rubles. For his holdings between 3,000 and 10,000 rubles he will get only two new rubles for three old ones. Deposits above 10,000 will be exchanged at the rate of one new ruble for two old ones. Those who placed their savings in state bonds will receive new bonds with a face value of one ruble for each three rubles of face value of the old bonds. In this way the number of rubles chasing scarce goods will be reduced, and so will pressure on prices. To sugarcoat the pill, the Kremlin announced at the same time that food rationing would be discontinued and lower prices fixed on a number of items. Since the urban working masses benefit from these measures, the net effect may well be to strengthen rather than weaken the Soviet dictatorship. In addition to reducing the money supply, this kind of currency reform redistributes the wealth of the country in favor of the low-income groups. It is a new species of expropriation—the expropriation of those who become rich in a communist society.

### ***Damning the ITO***

Maurice Thorez, French Communist leader, does not like the International Trade Organization. This is scarcely surprising, for the Soviet Union has boycotted the ITO ever since the United States first proposed it. The only Soviet satellite present at the current United Nations Conference on Trade and Employment in Havana is Czechoslovakia, whose timorous leaders still have hopes that trade may become a link between East and West. But M. Thorez' reasoning reveals the authentic Party line as pursued in France and in other economically disorganized nations. He told the peasants attending the recent regional meeting of the Communist Party at Macon that their Government betrays French agriculture by favoring the ITO. The Communists, M. Thorez' speech reveals, seek to drive a wedge between the farmers and the Schuman Government over alleged inequity in fiscal policy. The wickedness of "capitalistic industry," as against agricultural freedom, makes a good rallying point. Throughout the whole effort to woo the French peasants, the desire to sabotage the Marshall plan is manifest. It so happens that the ITO moves in the direction of world economic reconstruction under U. S. leadership, the last thing the Communists want. Said M. Thorez at the Macon meeting:

French agriculture is threatened in its foundations by the accords of Geneva and by the Charter submitted to the Havana Conference. Such a charter will deliver French agriculture, defenseless, over to United States competition.

The astonishing thing is that the same argument, in reverse, has been used by conservative U.S. elements who seek to turn the American farmer against the idea of freer world trade. We might ask, who follows what party line?

### ***Food as a weapon***

"Give a man power over my subsistence and he has power over my whole moral nature" is a warning of Alexander Hamilton which the Communists have elaborated into a positive technique. The studied policy of the communist-controlled government of Rumania to make the people dependent on it, even to the distribution of relief supplies, is responsible for the decision of CARE (Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe, Inc.) to end its efforts to deliver packages of food and clothing to that hapless country. Its operations initiated "at the urgent request of the Rumanian Government," CARE's activities were hampered from the outset, clearly in an attempt to win control of the distribution of food as a

weapon of political power. In overt violation of a signed agreement, the Government claimed customs duties on packages, subjected the beneficiaries to police questioning and ultimately jailed CARE's representative and his entire staff. In a week that heard Molotov charge Americans with profiteering in Germany, it takes a prodigious—ly outrageous insult to top the Russian's scurrility. The Rumanians won the prize, however. After smothering CARE, the government-controlled radio told their starving, charity-deprived people that many children had been taken ill by eating "adulterated" American food. The monstrous malice of such evil minds is underlined for us as we forward through CARE packages bought by a check representing the Christmas presents a husband and wife might have given one another. These AMERICA readers wrote us:

With the blessed feast of the Christ Child approaching, we'd like some European families to know that two anonymous Americans thought of them at Christmas time. Too, we want to share with others less fortunate than we the many blessings God has granted to us and our children. Would you please help us by sending the checks to CARE, along with the names of four families to receive food packages?

We shall, and gladly.

### ***We disaffiliate***

Even without John L. Lewis' penchant for flamboyant phraseology, the language of American trade unionism would continue to be salty and colorful. Nevertheless, friend and foe alike must grant that Mr. Lewis has done more than his share to enrich labor's vocabulary. Only a few years ago the boys were chuckling over "accouplement," as they had often chuckled before over *bon mots* culled from Will Shakespeare. Now they are chuckling again, for last week Mr. Lewis took the occasion of quitting the AFL to add another picturesque word to the speech of American workers. "We disaffiliate," he scribbled on a handy scrap of paper, which was then delivered to AFL President Green by the custodian of the United Mine Workers building in Washington. This was, of course, Mr. Lewis' way of manifesting scorn in the Olympian manner which he thinks befits him. If the gesture struck others as funny, that is attributable to the great and recent change in Mr. Lewis' fortunes. Only Jupiter can fittingly talk in Jovian accents and, as the last AFL convention showed, Mr. Lewis has become something much less than the Jupiter of American labor. He still retains the power associated with rigid control (which does not extend to politics, however) over 600,000 dues-paying coal miners, textile operators, construction workers, etc., but beyond the limits of the United Mine Workers, the great man's writ no longer runs. The AFL will naturally miss the per-capita payments on a 600,000 membership. Beyond that, it will miss nothing. Mr. Lewis' refusal to agree with the rest of the AFL on the necessity of filing non-communist affidavits under the T-H Act—which led to "disaffiliation"—indicates that the veteran leader of the United Mine Workers is out of step with the times.

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### ***The case of Mr. Pauley***

Several aspects of the Senate investigation into the speculations of Edwin W. Pauley, assistant to the Secretary of the Army, are of more than passing interest. Although the Republican inquisitors, urged on by presidential candidate Harold Stassen, have so far uncovered no evidence of wrong-doing on Mr. Pauley's part, one can only marvel at the lengths to which friendship can lead a man. As President Truman painfully learned when he nominated his friend Mr. Pauley to be Under-Secretary of the Navy, the California oil millionaire and big-time politician is a controversial character unacceptable to the majority in Congress. Yet the President persisted in his effort to find a place for Mr. Pauley in his administration. Even the fact that the gentleman was known to be a heavy speculator in commodities did not deter Mr. Truman, who, only a few short weeks ago, excoriated gambling on the exchanges and asked Congress to regulate it. More interesting, however, than this example of great but imprudent friendship, and certainly more important, is a question raised by Mr. Pauley in the course of the Senate hearings. Frankly admitting his own dealings in commodities—which he discontinued on being appointed to his Federal post—he wanted to know why the Senators were not equally concerned about speculation among Congressmen. To this embarrassing question, Senator Bridges made a completely unsatisfactory reply. He said that it was up to the voters, not Congress, to pass judgment on the conduct of legislators. Entirely apart from the fact that Congress is master of its own house, and can inquire into the fitness of its members, this answer fails to explain how the voters are to know that their representatives have been speculating in commodities unless Congress itself discloses the facts. The public certainly wants to learn if officials in the Executive branch have been using inside information to improve their private fortunes, but it would also like to know whether any of their elected representatives have been guilty of the same reprehensible practice. The Senate should broaden the scope of its investigations or risk the charge that it is acting from purely political motives.

### ***Venezuela elects new President***

More than a million Venezuelan citizens went to the polls Sunday, December 14, 1947, to choose between Rómulo Gallegos of the Democratic Action party and Rafael Caldera of the Christian Democratic Copei (*Comité Organizadora pro Elecciones Independientes*) party. The result was a sweeping victory for Señor Gallegos. He obtained 493,100 votes (75 per cent of the seats), while Señor Caldera received but 146,145. The Communists collected only 23,750 votes. Thus the Democratic Action party controls at least 38 of 45 seats in the senate, and has 70 out of the 100 Deputies in the Assembly. President-elect Gallegos promptly declared that he would continue along the lines of his Democratic Action party. First on the agenda, he added, would be the reorganization of the government, including the establishment of a new Ministry of Economy. Señor Gallegos' statement that he would tolerate all shades of oppo-

sition and attempt to eliminate the atmosphere of discord is particularly encouraging, since the free functioning of legitimate opposition parties is a characteristic trait of a genuinely democratic regime. We hope that Señor Gallegos' Democratic Action party will be able to temper its propaganda against other political groups, especially the Christian Democratic Copei Party. The latter has done considerable work in the field of popular education. It is desirable also that the anti-clerical campaign, which has sunk deep roots in certain sections of Venezuela's population, be brought to a halt by the President. As regards foreign affairs, Señor Gallegos said that Venezuela would continue the anti-totalitarian policy of the interim government, and he commented on the "extremely cordial" relations between his country and the United States. The victory of the Democratic Action party has been interpreted by competent observers as the approval by a majority of the somewhat leftist program pursued by the government of President Rómulo Betancourt in the past two years. But this gain by the Copei shows that the opposition has increased, too.

### ***Wider educational opportunities***

That "education come decisively to grips with the world-wide crisis of mankind" and share in the task of forging social and political weapons against atomic obliteration is the purpose which animates the sweeping recommendations made in the first report of President Truman's Commission of Higher Education, submitted on December 15. American colleges and universities are charged in the report with a larger role in the national life—with offering facilities whereby any qualified individual in any part of the country will ultimately be able to attain the kind of education suited to his aptitudes and interests, an education that will, at the same time, prepare "Americans to contribute their utmost to the achievement of world order and peace among men." Such objectives call for doubling college enrollments and an almost four-fold increase in attendance at graduate and professional schools in the next decade; they demand a recasting of curricula to prepare the student "more effectively than in the past for responsible roles in modern society." Such a democratic emphasis entails a new realization of the importance of general education, whose unity, says the report, "is splintered today by overspecialization"; it involves the establishment of hundreds of community colleges, recruiting a million new teachers, and an expanded program of adult education. Such an emphasis and such purposes find separate educational systems for Negroes and the quota system of religious discrimination not merely illegitimate but impossibly illogical and utterly indefensible. The magnitude of the proposals listed by the report—plant expansion, scholarships and subsidies—obviously requires financial aid from the Federal Government, in much the same fashion (says the report) as "the Federal Government assumes the responsibility of supplementing local efforts against the nation's enemies without." The size of the report, the work of twenty-eight civic and educational leaders, prohibits an immediate estimate of its merits.



### ***Catholics to spur DP cause***

Firmly convinced that our country should take a strong lead in solving the DP problem, Catholics of the United States will endeavor to "help bring about legislation in Congress to open the door to a substantial number of displaced persons." Thus spoke Msgr. Edward E. Swanstrom, executive director of War Relief Services-NCWC, in announcing the formation of the National Catholic Resettlement Council (NCRC). Msgr. Swanstrom is temporary chairman of the latter committee. The NCRC took shape after a two-day meeting in New York of various national Catholic organizations. The Council, the announcement indicated, will form special committees in each of 118 Catholic dioceses in this country. These committees will promote an extensive program of education, in order to develop in Americans a better understanding "of their responsibilities in meeting this great international humanitarian problem." The NCRC, through its affiliated committees, also intends to promote a program for sponsorship and reception of displaced persons arriving here. It hopes also to assist in finding homes and jobs, so that these unfortunates can be "properly established and adjusted." The newly organized Council, said Msgr. Swanstrom, will cooperate with other religious and civic groups interested in the DP problem. Among the sponsoring groups of the new Council are the National Catholic Welfare Conference, which assumed the administrative leadership, the National Conference of Catholic Charities and the National Catholic Rural Life Conference. The formation of such a council was deemed extremely necessary and timely. Various Catholic groups had hitherto done considerable work in helping resettle displaced persons. The Catholic Committee for Refugees, in particular, accomplished much since it was founded in 1937 for the purpose of aiding pre-war refugees from nazism. But the magnitude of the present DP problem calls for a program of unprecedented size. Centralized and coordinated action is needed. We hope that Catholics will wholeheartedly support the Council's plan, especially in furthering diocesan and local committees. For on these falls the ultimate responsibility for resettlement.

### ***"Released time" before the Supreme Court***

A case of deep concern to all Americans is at present in the hands of the U. S. Supreme Court. It is the McCollum case involving the right of the Champaign, Ill., Board of Education to cooperate with a local Council of Religious Education (made up of Protestant, Catholic and Jewish citizens) by permitting use of public-school rooms for classes in religion. After the plan was in satisfactory operation for seven years, Mrs. Vashti McCollum, a professed atheist, brought suit to have this right denied. The Illinois Supreme Court rejected her plea; so she took it to the U.S. Supreme Court, where it was recently argued. The importance of the case arises, as Father John Courtney Murray, S.J., points out in the NCWC *News Service*, from four considerations. First, the Champaign plan is a form of "released-time" program and such programs, in various forms, are in operation in some 7,000 school districts in 46 States. If the

Champaign plan is declared unconstitutional, the whole idea of "released time" may be affected. Second is the more serious problem of how the public school may in some way ally itself with religion rather than with secularism, and in some way cooperate with parents toward the religious education of their children. The Champaign plan and other "released-time" plans are one significant example of such cooperation. Third, the case involves the basic freedom of the American people to manage its own schools rather than have them managed by the Federal Government, even in its judicial branch. For while the issue concerns certain democratic rights of individuals, it concerns more fundamentally an element of the democratic process itself—how to balance the rights of individuals and the welfare of the community. And fourth, the issue of separation of Church and State has been brought into the case. The Supreme Court has a knotty problem to resolve—the relationship of religion to education and of government to religious education.

### ***Crystal-ball gazing***

There seems something quaintly Victorian about prophecy-making; it is an activity that thrives better in the ample air of unquestioning confidence in unlimited Progress onward and ever upward than it does in an age afflicted with atomic ague. Even so, there was a spate of prophecies recently, sixty of them, in fact, transcribed on microfilm, placed in a special age-resistant flask buried in the cornerstone of the annex of the New York Advertising Club. Leaders of business, education, religion and social welfare saw varied futures in their separate crystal balls. For Paul G. Hoffman, maker of Studebaker cars, it depends on our use of atomic energy whether "life will be either greatly enriched or much impoverished"; the national commander of the Salvation Army foresaw "peace and abundance in 2004 because greed and lust of the 20th century will have been brought into the open where they can be seen and destroyed"; the president of the Board of Education sanguinely counts on the schools coming into their own "with teachers, the best brains of every community, dedicated to its greatest trust, the elevation of its children to their highest possible development"; but, according to Dr. James F. Bender, director of the National Institute for Human Relations, the teachers will be singularly ineffective, for he foresees more divorces than marriages, with polygamy socially approved. The future was read the same day but in a different context and to a different conclusion by Archbishop Richard J. Cushing of Boston at the annual Jesuit Philippine Dinner. Despite the frenzy of current attacks on the Church—rather, precisely because of them—the Archbishop predicted a spiritual revival of Catholicism unrivaled since the Middle Ages. "This yearning on the part of many peoples for the unity, sanctity and universality which were and are the marks of Catholicism, this rediscovery of their Catholic roots by people who once thought that they had outgrown Catholicism, is one of the most amazing and encouraging signs of the times," the Archbishop declared. Clearly, many things enter into prophecies. For instance, whether you believe in God.



## Washington Front

In a roundabout sort of way the Communists, an insignificant party as far as numbers go, seem bound to exercise a certain influence on the course of politics in the country. However slow and even wrongheaded Washington may be at times on needed legislation, it is usually keen and clear as crystal when it comes to politics. At present it is the nation's two big problem children—John Lewis and Henry Wallace—who are causing long thoughts among the Capital's politicians.

The line of thought about Mr. Wallace is clear enough. He has declared open war on President Truman. He openly speaks about a third party, of which he would, of course, be the head. He is backed by the Communists and a heterogeneous pack of fellow travelers. Therefore he is backed by Russia. But why Russia? If Mr. Wallace runs, it means a Republican candidate will be President. Therefore the Communists want a Republican President. Therefore Russia does also. But again, why Russia? So runs the line of reasoning about Mr. Wallace, but it always ends with a big question mark: why Russia?

The line about Mr. Lewis also ends in a question mark. He broke with the AFL over its decision to accept the Taft-Hartley non-communist affidavit. The other evening a nationally known newspaperman, an expert in labor

relations, plaintively asked in a group: "Why do Jawahar and Phil Murray keep holding an umbrella over the Commies?" In the course of the evening he repeated the question several times, without a satisfactory answer, except a partial one to the effect that the *Daily Worker* has begun to attack Mr. Murray, so perhaps we can count him out of the present calculations.

It is part of Mr. Lewis' usual game to mystify, of course, to keep people guessing. Yet it occurs to this observer to wonder if Mr. Lewis is not himself guessing, whether he is not himself mystified. The very curtness of his "disaffiliating" notice to the AFL might signify this. But his present apparent tenderness for the Communists is bound to have a certain effect on the national policies of both Democrats and Republicans, if only to make them waver.

As for Mr. Wallace, it is noticed that he has not yet come out clearly against the Marshall plan, even though that measure is being presented as an anti-communist one. Nor has he apparently joined the attack on the Socialists, which is the second major section of the current communist party line. When he does these two things, the air will be a little clearer—but, if he does, he will probably have forfeited any real chance of an effective third party. Could it be that he also is guessing, that he is mystified, and that we thus have two problem children wandering around in a maze and making everybody dizzy watching them? Russia would like that.

WILFRID PARSONS

## Underscorings

Off and on we have noted in this column the increasing concern of many Protestants for the need of religion in education. Recently, not only individual Protestants but representative Protestant bodies have spoken out and taken action to combat the notorious secularization of our people through education.

► Some headlines from news releases of the past few months will show the trend of thinking on this subject. Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert told the North American Interseminary Conference at Oxford, Ohio, that public education, while wanting to avoid indoctrination, "effectively indoctrinates successive generations in the notion that God is negligible and that Jesus Christ does not matter." Preaching in the Washington Protestant Cathedral on November 30, the Rev. Robert McC. Hatch bemoaned "the essential godlessness of many of our secular schools and colleges" in contrast to the basic religious orientation of church-related institutions. And again, Dr. Edwin H. Rian, writing in the *Presbyterian* on "Protestants Wake Up!" declared that the only reasonable reaction Protestants can afford to have to "the trend toward secularism in America, and its logical outcome, communism," is "to establish Protestant systems of education."

"If only twenty per cent of all pupils pass through the Protestant system, it will have a tremendous influence upon American education. . . . The Christian school will act as a deterrent to the contemptuous attitude toward Christianity which characterizes so much of present education."

► Here are some Protestant-action headlines: "Rhode Island Gets First Parochial School" (at Pawtucket); "Says Baptists May Have to Found Own Parochial Schools"; "Conservative Protestants to Establish Christian Day Schools" (Omaha, Neb.); "Protestant Parochial School Doubles Membership" (Seattle, Wash.); "Missouri Lutherans Plan Drive to Increase Parochial School Enrollment"; "Accommodations Filled at Louisville Baptist High School"; "Plan Protestant Parochial School" (Kirkwood, Pa.).

► The centennial of their work in New Orleans, which the Jesuits have just celebrated, is really the centennial of their return to New Orleans, from which they were expelled in 1763 by the French Government, which the previous year had proscribed their work in all of France. In New Orleans and nearby, the Jesuits now have the Church of the Immaculate Conception on downtown Baronne St., the Holy Name of Jesus Church on St. Charles Ave., the Jesuit High School (with 800 students), the Manresa House of Retreats at Convent Station, and Loyola University, which this year registered 3,183 students.

A.P.F.

# Editorials

## A time for unity

The wonderfully poignant liturgy of Advent is filled with the calm confidence that God will come to His people and bring them peace. "*Et pax erit in terra nostra, dum venerit . . . there shall be peace in our land when He comes, and He shall speak peace among the nations and His power shall be from sea to sea.*"

He came, and He comes again this Christmas, but where is the peace He brings? There *is* peace, to be sure, in individual souls, and that is a peace that the world, with all its shocks and incursions, cannot give or take away. There is peace in the communion of saints that is God's Church, and the temporalities of the world cannot extinguish that peace. But where is the peace among nations that He shall bespeak?

There is no peace, but only the cold war that fans a hot breath of fear in too many hearts. Russia and her satellites on the one side, and the Western nations, headed by the United States, on the other, are locked in a struggle based on the principle that this time it is for keeps, for life and death. The meeting of the Foreign Ministers at London was, from the very beginning, doomed to failure. Germany's problem, for herself and for the peace of Europe, was not solved at this meeting, and probably will remain for months to come. As a consequence, Austria will continue to be bled by four occupation forces and by economic enslavement to Russia. The nations behind the iron curtain will be ruthlessly dominated by their minority communist groups; China will still agonize under Moscow-directed revolution; Korea and Japan will have their peaceful future blocked by Kremlin callousness.

Truly, we sigh, "peace, peace, but there is no peace." But wait . . . there is another side to the picture.

In France, the communist-inspired strikes have been broken by unprecedentedly stern government measures. Further, France shows no signs of panic over the present strained diplomatic relations with Russia on the matter of repatriations. In Italy, the de Gasperi Government, with a record vote of confidence to back it, has broken the general strike planned by the Communists. American aid to Greece and Turkey is functioning well, if slowly, and both those countries have avoided disasters that would most certainly have overtaken them without that aid. Above all, Congress, with commendable—though not quite ideal—expeditiousness, has voted the interim aid to Europe (and included China, though that commitment may be modified) pending the drafting of long-term aid under the European Recovery Program.

All this adds up to the strong probability that Russian aggression and penetration have attained their high-water mark. This conclusion has been reached by (among

others) a subcommittee of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs after a first-hand study of conditions in Europe. Representative Franklin J. Maloney, Republican, of Pennsylvania, submitting the report, said:

The Communist hope of early victory in Western Europe through legal democratic means is dead for years to come. The possibility of recourse to their party cadres through illegal and violent means is therefore open. Within a few months we shall know the choice they have made. If they do not chose a violent strike for power in France and Italy, then for the time being the limits of communist expansion have been set for the Western world. . . . Secretary of State Marshall has spoken of "a momentum" in Europe now moving in the right direction. Our examination of European political conditions tends to confirm this.

In addition, the clear failure of Russia to carry a single point in the recently adjourned General Assembly of the United Nations buttresses our impression that the Russian bolt is shot. Where Russia dominated a year or six weeks ago, of course, she dominates still: she has not yielded a single foot of infiltrated land; where she has engendered confusion, she does so still—witness China, Austria and a dozen other places. But that is the past that cannot for the present be undone; the future begins to look somewhat bright for the end of Russian expansion.

Or—it would look bright, or at least much brighter, if a sturdy voice of American unanimity were raised in support of our present foreign policy and of a domestic policy imperative to buttress it. Unfortunately, there are still Henry Wallaces to play, all unwittingly no doubt, the very game of the Communists, by shouting up and down the land that Wall Street and the military are bent on plunging us smack into war. There are still Senator Tafts who will consider only dubious half-measures toward home economic control necessary if we are to aid Europe without risking runaway inflation and then depression. There are still others in high places who, for political advantage or economic gain, will do all in their power to block the full-scale Marshall plan when it comes to congressional debate.

We want no man to abandon his honest convictions. There can be valid conscientious objectors in a cold war as well as in a hot one. All we ask is that where there is a strong assumption that our Government's policy is right, in both its foreign and domestic aspects, those who may be inclined to disagree with it give it their cooperation. After all, there is the duty of civic obedience unless one's doubt is clearly a prudent one. That our policy, domestic and especially foreign, is absolutely wrong and therefore definitely *not* to be supported, we think only the utmost rabidity would contend.

The Western world seems fairly on the verge of stop-

ping the Hitlerite march of the Soviet dictatorship. Now if never before we need the concerted voice of free men raised in a unanimous chorus. The United States, as the greatest champion of freedom for all, must raise its unanimous voice the loudest.

This Advent may yet bring the beginning of peace to at least the Western nations, if we can only wake to know that now is the time for unity. Our unity will hasten His coming. And with His coming, *jam non erit timor in finibus nostris* . . . there will be no fear within our borders.

## Communists and civil liberties

It is a principle in equity that the plaintiff should come into court with clean hands. Our withers are quite unwrung, therefore, by the anguished cries of the Communists and their sympathizers that they are deprived of freedom of speech and otherwise injured in their civil rights by the recent turning on of the heat by the Government.

What does concern us, however, is the possibility that in trying to blast the Communists we may find ourselves hoist with our own petard. A fundamental difference—we might almost say *the* fundamental difference—between American and Soviet policy is that we are trying to secure respect for the rights and the dignity of the human person, while the Soviets are trying to impose a system which denies and overrides both. Our Bill of Rights is the classic safeguard of human rights against the action of even the majority in our nation. It circumscribes the action of the Government with regard to the individual. The Government may not move against the person or property of anyone except in accord with the due process of law. And since all persons are equally under the law, all are equally under the protection of due process. If it is possible for that protection to be withdrawn from any person, it can be withdrawn from all persons. Civil rights are indivisible.

If, therefore, we are somewhat deaf to the frenzied cries of the Communists, we are by no means blind to the danger created by the attempt to deal with the Communists. That danger is almost inherent in the nature of the cold war. The war is carried on, very largely, by means of propaganda. Molotov in London and Vishinsky at Lake Success are faithfully echoed by the *Daily Worker* and its like. Now it is true that, even in wartime, we cannot afford to dispense with criticism of the Government. And we tolerate a great deal of stupid and dishonest criticism in order not to stifle honest and useful criticism. We recognize that the critics, in general, belabor the Government because, in their opinion, it is not winning the war fast enough. But at the present moment the Communist propagandists are interested precisely in our *not* winning the cold war. They are, in effect, the Soviet fifth column behind our lines. Their activities should no more be covered by the right of free speech than should the shouting of "Fire" in a crowded theatre.

Here, however, is the danger and the difficulty. If the Communists are simply another American political party, they cannot be muzzled without a serious and instant

threat to the liberties of all parties. If, on the other hand, they be recognized for what they are, an organized conspiracy to thwart American policy and advance Russian policy, and ultimately to overthrow our republican form of government and do away with our fundamental freedoms, they cannot claim the protection of our laws. And Congress and the courts have already delayed too long the settling of this question of fact.

Then there is the question of the potent and proliferating "front" organizations. We do not think that the Attorney General's blacklist is the best or the safest answer to this. Rather would we lean towards the suggestion of Morris Ernst, a veteran fighter for civil liberties whom it is difficult to see in the role of a dictator or Gestapo chief. He would draft legislation requiring the registration of all pressure groups, just as lobbies must be registered in Washington, and unions under the Taft-Hartley Act. Too many innocents have been decoyed into such groups, and too many scoundrels hide behind respected names. It should not be impossible to draw up legislation (Mr. Ernst offers to do it) which would expose the subversives without imperiling the rights of loyal Americans.

## Politics and inflation

By the looks of things the country will have a chance during the New Year to learn what happens when political answers are given to serious economic problems. The experience will be educational, and, like all education, expensive. Just how expensive only the future can tell.

When Congress was called back to Washington in November, the President asked for legislation to curb skyrocketing prices. He proposed a ten-point program which included a return to limited rationing and price controls.

From the initial reaction of the Republican majority, it was clear that the President's program had no chance of being accepted. GOP spokesmen were extremely angry with Mr. Truman for raising the question at all, insinuating that somehow or other the President had hit below the belt. It was not long, however, before cooler heads realized that the public was, indeed, incensed over high prices, disgusted with the negative attitude of Senator Taft, and expected the majority party in Congress to offer something more than criticism and denunciation. There followed several off-the-record meetings until, finally, the Republicans announced an anti-inflation program of their own. This called for the immediate enactment of a law to accomplish two things:

1. Control speculation and the money supply a) by authorizing commodity exchanges to regulate gambling through voluntary agreement, b) by requiring Federal Reserve Banks to maintain gold reserves of 40 per cent covering their currency in circulation and 35 per cent covering their deposits.

2. Control the distribution of scarce goods by controls over exports and transportation and by relaxing anti-trust laws to permit voluntary agreements among industrialists to allocate scarce commodities.



In addition, the GOP leaders announced that they would do something about extending rent controls after the first of the year.

Though this program was obviously inadequate, the Republican majority attempted to steamroller it through the House. Upon the failure of this maneuver, Mr. Halleck of Indiana, GOP floor leader in the House, said that no further attempt would be made to pass anti-inflation legislation at this session. And so, after an almost equally futile gesture by the Senate, the solons left Washington to enjoy a Merry Christmas at home.

There are, of course, honest differences of opinion in Congress over the best way to deal with inflation, but it seems to us that the controlling factor in too many cases is political. The present Republican majority is sensitive to business opinion; the Democratic minority—some Southern Representatives excepted—is equally sensitive to labor opinion. Neither party wants to make a move that will be unpopular with the farm bloc, especially now when many farmers, disillusioned by the Republican-dominated 80th Congress, are in process of shifting back to the Democrats. The result is that half-measures are adopted, or nothing is done at all. Meanwhile the problem of prices remains.

The chief blame for this unsatisfactory state of affairs rests ultimately with the people. If the votes of many Congressmen reflect a greater concern for the interests of some group or region than for the general welfare, that comes about because the groups and regions themselves place their own interests ahead of the interests of the country as a whole. (In their own minds the two are, of course, identical.) Until more of us come to think *nationally* on national issues, Congress will continue to make economic decisions according to political criteria. If this procedure turns out to be expensive, we ought to be the last to complain. When the present boom breaks on the rocks of greed, let those especially remember this whose attitude now makes it politically difficult for Congress to deal effectively with inflated prices.

## Debate on foreign aid

Passage by the House of the interim-aid bill on December 15 indicates clearly that the majority of Congressmen have come to realize the urgent character of the European economic crisis. The judgments of the doubting were definitely influenced by recent developments in France and Italy, as well as the breakdown of the Foreign Ministers Conference discussing the future of Germany. We can only hope that when the long-range program for European recovery, popularly known as the Marshall plan, comes up for debate, the same note of realism will prevail.

There are, however, certain aspects of the whole interim-aid debate which are profoundly disturbing. First, of course, is that it apparently did not fully convince the House Appropriations Committee, which body has much to say about the actual granting of funds authorized in the interim-aid bill. Its chairman, Representative John Taber, has already demonstrated his ability to hold up

legislation while he attempts to make savings which somehow do not materialize.

Following its chairman's line of thought, the Appropriations Committee reported out a bill supposedly cutting \$88 million from the \$597 million authorized already by Congress. The practical effect of the reduction, apart from the dangerous delay, would be to have France and Italy repudiate foreign obligations.

During the interim-aid debate, various special-interest groups were busy attempting to re-write the original bill to suit their purposes. Congressmen can always be found to do such chores. In addition, some members of Congress found the special session a good time to make speeches for the constituents back home. Of all the special pleading done, Congressmen from the farm-bloc States had the most to say. In aiding Europe, they did not want to sell American agriculture short, so they said.

One time-consuming digression concerned conditions to be attached to fertilizer shipments sent abroad. On December 9, for example, hours were spent discussing this point. Those who know the strain that has been put upon American agriculture during the war effort cannot but be sympathetic to Representative Jensen's lengthy address on soil conservation and the need for fertilizer production. His plea for enactment of a national land-policy bill deserves a hearing. The question is whether the time to debate it was during the special session debating emergency aid. On the occasion other Congressmen delivered, or read into the record, the reputed feelings of their farmer constituents on the fertilizer shortage.

And so it went, with the wheat interests and other groups all making sure that their friends would have to make no sacrifice, but might even profit from the aid program. The farm bloc was having a field day, as might be expected, seeing that food, farm machinery and fertilizer are some of the items most needed by depleted Europe.

Apropos of which we quote Representative Flannagan, long known as a farm-State Congressman. Aroused by the oratory and irritated by the delay, Mr. Flannagan went on record as follows:

We have before us one of the most important pieces of legislation that has ever come before this body and, in my opinion, it is time to quit demagoging and do some straight thinking.

Then, after recalling his own pro-farm record, the Congressman continued:

I do not believe that those who are speaking for the farmers here today are helping the cause of agriculture. I believe you have rendered the farmers of America a disservice, because I believe that the farmers of America believe in democracy. . . . I do not know of a better way to protect democracy than to go to the rescue of the sixteen western Powers in Europe who are struggling to preserve their democracy.

For which we can only praise this outstanding farm spokesman. He speaks for the real rural America, and not for those specialized interests which want nothing except protection of prices on their own single-crop output.

# For Christians at Christmas

Benjamin L. Masse

For millions of Americans this will be a very Merry Christmas. Even though many families will not be able to buy as much as they did a year or two ago, they will still be able to finance a dinner with all the trimmings and have enough folding money left over for the gifts which are traditional among us. The toymakers will do all right, and so will the makers of just about everything else, from bobby-pins to automobiles.

What misleads those of us who are doing a lot of grumbling these days is a lack of perspective. We see shortages here and there: we cannot buy a home or even rent one, and the car we ordered two years ago is still no more substantial than some auto-dealer's earnest promise. Prices have gone up beyond all reason, prices of shoes and clothes and foodstuffs, and many of us have had to dig into wartime savings to balance the monthly budget. As for savings out of current income, we abandoned that tidy practice months ago, about the time OPA fell to pieces. And then those taxes!

Such is the litany of our complaints, and we laugh scornfully every time the Department of Commerce says that production and income are running at record levels, or the Department of Labor releases statistics showing an incredible 60 million people gainfully employed. This may be prosperity, we say, but, brother, I could do with a little less of it.

What we forget is that the United States, compared with the rest of the world, is a land overflowing with milk and honey; a nation so fabulously well off that nineteenth's of the world's population, if they could but see our prosperity, would scarcely believe their eyes. For the fact is that, as we prepare to celebrate Christmas amid material abundance, the rest of the world groans in unparalleled poverty and destitution. If this Christmas Day is for them a merry one, that will be, as it has been for the past seven years, only because they have learned to rise above the material things of life and find happiness in the intangible riches of the spirit. Only those who have discovered in their poverty the secret of the poor Christ will rejoice this year at the commemoration of His birth. For millions of lukewarm Christians, and for the millions and uncounted millions of others who know not Bethlehem and what a mighty thing it was that happened there, this Christmas Day will be one of the saddest they have ever known.

As we ponder the heavy burden of sorrow under which the modern world is bent—and, if you wish, the pin-pricks which irritate us—we cannot escape the conclusion that somewhere something is gravely wrong with us. If we believe in God, we know that this tension, this social stress, this breakdown of economic machines—not to mention the terrorism and concentration camps behind the iron curtain—are no part of His plan for human life. We realize, of course, that this life is a "vale of tears,"

*"Christmas means the redemption of the whole human race. It means, then, that the love of Christ must overflow our lives as individuals and members of a family group. It must extend to our lives as citizens of our respective native lands and members of the world community."*

that only through suffering do we merit our eternal crown, that if we would be truly disciples of Christ, we must take up our cross and follow Him. But we know, too, that this life is not intended to be a hell on earth. Hell is a punishment which God has reserved for the next life, for those who refuse to love Him in this one. It is in us, therefore, not in the heavens above, that the trouble lies; and it is only by looking within that we shall discover what is wrong without.

Is not that, after all, one of the supreme lessons of Bethlehem? The lesson of human freedom and therefore of human responsibility? The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity became man in order to save us. But how could this have happened if man is not free, free even to disobey God's law and oppose His will? Bethlehem exists historically because Original Sin exists; and Original Sin exists because the first man, created free, used his freedom to rebel against his Maker. Only in a context of freedom does the Redemption have meaning, for without freedom there can be neither responsibility nor guilt.

Christmas, then, is a feast of free men. (Which may be one reason why our contemporary totalitarians hate it so and try to destroy it. So long as men remember the meaning of Bethlehem, no dictator can ever make them believe they are slaves.) If our world has fallen on evil ways, it is because we the people have done evil things. And being free men we can, with the help of God, retrace our erring steps, repair the damage we have done, and rear on a new foundation of sincerity and good will a world in accord with our heart's desires.

What else has the Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, been telling us these past eight years? Through the entire series of his Christmas allocutions you will look in vain for any suggestion that the catastrophe which has overwhelmed the world was inevitable, or that it is useless to try to restore order because some blind current of history is running strongly against us. The war had barely begun in the autumn of 1939—it was to continue for six bitter years—when the Holy Father took the first steps toward building a Christian and lasting peace. Year after year he added to what eventually became an imposing moral structure, and no matter how furiously the battle raged or how widespread grew the destruction, he refused to lose hope. Other men despaired of Europe and the world, but not the Vicar of Christ. When the night was darkest, he kept his eyes on the Star which shone over Bethlehem. In its clear light, he saw that what men had destroyed through sin, they could rebuild through sinlessness.

In the Christian dispensation there is no room, then, for despair. The cold, dreary belief in a blind, inexorable fate, driving men willy-nilly toward catastrophe, was born and bred in the black night of paganism. It should have no part in your life and in mine. In spirit, we have heard angels singing, we have rushed over the Judean

hills, we have found the Child wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in the manger. No matter how dreary the present may be, or how desperate seems the future, we can always hope. For so long as we are free men, we can with God's help stem the tides of disaster; we can roll back the forces which are driving our world to ruin.

We might as well be honest with ourselves. Our deep desires for the postwar world have not been realized. Though the hot war has been over now for two years, a cold war rages still. As we prepare to commemorate the sacred birth of Christ, we are conscious that our world, unlike the world of Caesar Augustus, is not at peace. What then? Are we to throw up our hands and let grim events take their course? Because the instrument of our desires, the United Nations, has so far proved unable to ensure peace, are we to despair of world order and resign ourselves to still another war? Are we to float supinely with the dangerous current of our times?

Obviously not, for such is not the way of Christian men. We have been checked for the moment in the course we first elected. Very well, but there is more than one way to the goal. Even now we are moving, admittedly along a more difficult and more dangerous course, to achieve the peace which has so far escaped us. At considerable expense and sacrifice to ourselves we have just about decided to help war-torn nations which believe in freedom and human dignity to get back on their feet. We want to make a start with them toward building a world which, if not Christian, at least permits Christian ideals to grow and flourish. That is the meaning of the Marshall proposal, now known officially as the European Recovery Program. If some of us do not yet see this, it is perhaps because our Christian vision of life has become obscured by greed and selfishness and chauvinism and all the other ugly fruits of modern secularism.

That disturbing thought suggests another meaning of Bethlehem, still greater tidings than the message of human freedom. It is the message of love. A man cannot enter the stable wherein the Christ Child was born and look on Him lying there in the manger and ever afterward doubt the love of God for the creatures of His hand. Each one of us can say truly, however little we may understand it, that God loves me, that He loves all my fellow men, too. Else why did He choose to assume our nature, to live among us, to suffer and die for us? And why, especially, did He come to us in the winsome, disarming helplessness of a Child? The message of Bethlehem above all other messages is this: the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, moved by His love for us, was born in time of a human Mother that we might be reborn for all eternity as sons of His Divine Father. We are, then, brothers of Jesus Christ, and brothers of one another.

It may seem a far jump from this glorious supernatural truth to the tough realities of foreign policy. But that is only because the secularist atmosphere of our times has affected all of us. (Our bishops knew what they were about when they emphasized secularism, in their message a few weeks ago, as the cause of the world's distress.) If we take our stand near the crib of

the Christ Child, and from there look out upon the world, we shall understand that the Incarnation has social implications that transcend merely personal or individual needs. We cannot very well love this Child if we ignore the sufferings of those He loves; and He loves all redeemed humanity. Banded together, then, in society, we cannot act through the instrumentality we call the State in any other way than we would act as individuals. "This is a Christian nation," President Truman wrote to the Holy Father last summer, seeking the cooperation of the Vicar of Christ in American efforts to establish world peace. And he showed thereby a remarkable insight into this fundamental truth, that the foreign policy—and every other policy—of a Christian nation must reflect the faith it professes or risk being as futile as it is insincere.

It is, alas, easy for us to ignore the full meaning of Bethlehem. Christmas brings to each of us deep spiritual consolations, and these are good. It is rich in human sentiment and earthly pleasures, and these are good, too. It binds families closer together, deepening the love between husband and wife, and between parents and children, and God knows this is



good, also. But Christmas means more than this: it means the redemption of the whole human race. It means, then, that the love of Christ must overflow our lives as individuals and members of a family group. It must extend to our lives as citizens of our respective native

lands and members of the world community.

This does not mean that there is such a thing as a supernatural foreign policy or a supernatural economic program. But it does mean that there are foreign policies and economic programs which are inspired by Christian ideals, or are at least in harmony with them; and that there are foreign policies and economic programs which are not. It means, therefore, that the position we take toward concrete policies in the world of affairs must be based on something more than self-interest, prejudice, chauvinism and that dislike of "foreigners" which is all too natural to fallen human nature. If it is not, we are clearly infected with secularism. Despite the faith we profess, we are victims of our pagan times.

These are serious thoughts for Christmas time but not unhappy ones. By all means let us enjoy the day. Let us rejoice in the spiritual consolations which God grants us, in the happiness of the children with their toys, in the memories the old familiar hymns stir in our hearts, in the material gifts a kindly Providence has showered on us. But let us not forget our brothers in other lands. Let us not ignore the full meaning of the Child lying in the Manger and the lessons of love and sacrifice and responsibility He came to teach us. In this desperate year of Our Lord, 1947, there is no place for part-time Christians. Too much depends, for human freedom and happiness, on what we Americans do the next few months.



# The Christ Child goes abroad

Mary Tinley Daly

Mary Tinley Daly is the wife of newspaperman John J. Daly, and the mother of six children. Her weekly column, "At Our House," is syndicated to the Catholic press by NCWC Feature Service, and she has written extensively for various magazines and newspapers.

Hollanders passing by Korte Vleerstraat in a poor section of The Hague saw a surprising sight one summer day.

There, on a rubble-strewn lot, was an attractive young American woman working and directing clean-up operations of a group of thirty little Dutch boys. Her dark hair curling with heat and exertion, her brown eyes shining with enthusiasm, Stellita Stapleton Renchard was doing her best to make the boys understand what she wanted done.

The boys didn't understand English, Mrs. Renchard couldn't speak Dutch—so gestures were the common language. And gestures she used, getting over the idea.

She pulled and pushed in pantomime and pointed to the remains of the bombed buildings: "You—that—kaput!" she directed. The boys did as they were told. By the end of the day, the walls of three of the four shattered buildings on the lot lay in neat piles of brick. Tired and dirty, Mrs. Renchard and her young helpers called it a day—the first day of a great project, providing a safe playground for poor children.

This was the beginning of the Christ Child Society in Europe, carrying on the spirit of the parent organization established in the United States more than sixty years ago by Miss Mary Merrick.

Christ Child work for needy children was nothing new to Stellita Stapleton Renchard. The Stapletons had always been ardent workers in the Society in the United States. Naturally, Stellita grew up with the idea that she must carry on the spirit of the Christ Child, doing the work most needed by children of the community. For her, that community had been Washington, D. C.

After her marriage to George Renchard, a diplomat, she moved abroad and lived in one country after another. In 1946 the Renchards moved to the United States Embassy at The Hague. With two babies to care for and a great deal of entertaining to do, Stellita Renchard had her hands full; but her eye saw many things to be done.

She was impressed by the gallant way the people of Holland were reconstructing their country. She noticed, though, that while Holland was busy rebuilding her bombed cities, hospitals and schools, the children were neglected. After years of Nazi occupation of their country, these children had learned that what was wrong was right and what was right was unpatriotic. They played in the dangerous streets and, during the winter, ran barefoot along the icy pavements. Among the poor, there was at least one case of tuberculosis in almost every family.

On a visit home to Washington in March, 1946, Stellita Renchard discussed the situation with Miss Merrick, founderess of the Christ Child Society.

"You know what those children need, don't you, Stellita?"

"I know, Miss Mary," confessed Stellita, her dark eyes

troubled. "They do need the Christ Child. But with my own two babies—and nobody in Holland familiar with Christ Child work—I wonder if I could do it."

Miss Merrick just smiled.

During her short visit in the United States, Stellita Renchard explained what she hoped to do for the children of the Netherlands and asked her friends in this country to send her discarded clothing—send it often and regularly.

Returning to Holland in May of 1946, she secured permission of Bishop Hulbers of Haarlem to start a branch of the Christ Child Society in his diocese. Next she called on the Burgomaster and asked what was most needed for the children of The Hague. He suggested a convalescent home.

"I'm sorry," she said regretfully, "but that is entirely beyond our resources at the present time. What is the next need?"

"It's a playground where our children can play in safety," answered the Burgomaster unhesitatingly. "That is a very great need."

"That we can do," said Stellita confidently. "We have no funds, but I have the promise of old clothes from America."

The Burgomaster was kind, but amused. "Old clothes will hardly provide a playground, Mrs. Renchard," he smiled, "in spite of good intentions."

"Will you give us land for the playground," she persisted, "and may I select a neighborhood?"

Permission granted, she mapped out The Hague and walked through the poor districts. The playground must be located near the homes of the children who needed it most, so she submitted three possible locations to the City Council.

A few days later she received word that "The Municipality of The Hague will be pleased to put the ground at Korte Vleerstraat at your disposal free of cost for one year." (At Mrs. Renchard's insistence, the time limit was extended to ten years.)

The lot was a hopeless-looking piece of ground—or would look hopeless to anyone but Stellita Renchard. Besides the dilapidated buildings, there was a wall on only two sides; one side was completely open and the other had a half-torn-down fence. This had to be made into a safe place for children to play!

Neighborhood boys did all the clearing they could, aided by Stellita, but finally the time came when a truck had to be hired to haul away the refuse, money spent to rebuild the wall and to fence in the open side.

Just in time, the promised boxes of old clothes came from the States. Stellita invited a small group of Dutch women, and a few Americans, to meet at her home for "a special opening." She explained her plan to them—to

sell the clothing and use the money to fix up the playground.

"And now," she announced, "we'll open the boxes!"

The women were thrilled at seeing the contents of the boxes, as women anywhere would be if their clothing budget had been meager and ration coupons scarce. There were evening dresses, day dresses, sweaters, underwear and—shoes!

Eagerly they pressed and renovated the garments and sent out cards announcing their first sale. Wealthy people were invited and told they must bring an old garment as well as pay for the "new" article, acquired without coupons.

The sale opened at two o'clock, and by 2:45 everything had been sold. Thus the "baby Christ Child," the first foreign branch of the Society, was launched financially.

Stellita's letters home tell some interesting "histories" of the donated clothing. An old fur evening wrap, age twenty, became the cherished possession of one of Holland's wealthiest women. Another evening wrap was bought by the daughter of a former Dutch Minister to Washington, whose husband is attached to the Dutch Court. A winter suit, discarded because it was shiny in the back, was bought by a Baroness, who turned the skirt inside out and wore the suit proudly to a British Embassy tea.

All the clothing sent from America found a royal welcome and provided needed capital for the playground. The old garments, acquired as part of the transaction for "new" pieces, were given to the poor.

One box from the States almost caused a riot. It contained a pair of ice skates—impossible to obtain in Holland—and of course everybody wanted them! The committee began to wonder how the matter could be settled without losing the good-will of the "customers." Finally, one of the committee had the bright idea of renting out the skates, a week at a time. Everyone was satisfied, and the money is still rolling in from the skates!

The proceeds of the sales provided funds to clear the lot, repair the shattered wall, fence in the open side and add iron gates.

As the need was urgent, the playground was put to use at the earliest possible moment, even before everything was completed. Hundreds of children came, ragged and poor, their torn dresses and trousers kept together with rope or pieces of string. All were pathetically happy to have a place to play without dodging passing vehicles or tumbling buildings.

On the lot was a one-room brick building, 24 by 26 feet, which the workers repaired and used as a clubhouse in bad weather. The Christ Child workers had to do a lot of shopping around and bargaining to get materials for this repair work. Playground equipment, too, was hard to get and costly. Progress was slow, but it was steady, and finally the playground was finished!

Stellita sent Miss Merrick an account of the formal opening on June 24, 1947:

It turned out to be quite an event, broadcast by KRO, the largest radio system in Holland. Understand the program was short-waved to the States.

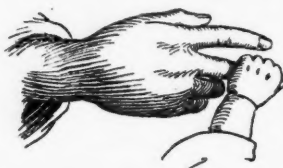
Dutch newspapers carried the story, even in the far north of the country. The Papal Nuncio blessed the ground and the American Ambassador spoke. Many chiefs of other missions attended—among them the Canadian Ambassador, the Ministers of Italy, of Australia, of South Africa, etc. Many important people in the Municipality came, too, including Catholic and Protestant clergy. It was a nice ceremony at the playground, where we had the two flags—American and Dutch—draped on the platform.

There are now 400 children enrolled at the playground. The Christ Child Society has secured the services of two social workers for home visiting, where they see distressing poverty in all the homes they visit. Their aim is to make families feel that the interest of the Society does not end at the playground but extends to everything that affects the children. The playground is looked upon as the center of attraction in the neighborhood.

Miss Jeanne Simons, playground director, has inaugurated evening meetings in the clubhouse, similar to the work done in Christ Child Houses in the U. S.

There are a singing group and four football teams, using equipment donated by the American Navy. There is a Mothers' Club and a Neighborhood Club. During the month of August, the Society maintained a summer camp where twenty children at a time were cared for each week.

The welfare work done by the Christ Child Society in its new branch is being watched in Holland as an example of true Catholic Action, and enthusiastic approval has come from all quarters of the country. The Society has now been asked to start in Rotterdam and other places. The American Women's Club in Holland became interested and has voted to help. It's a going concern.



In keeping with Christ Child tradition, last Christmas Mrs. Elinor Ryan Brady, granddaughter of the late Thomas Fortune Ryan, arranged a party for two hundred poor children who would have had no other Christmas celebration. Mrs. Brady went to Belgium for warm sweaters (the exact size for each child), ordered toys from England and Christmas wrappings from the States. In the gayly decorated gym of the local convent, where the party was held, were two trees—the Christ Child crib and a pile of sweaters were under one, and under the other sat "Saint Nick" (an Embassy chauffeur dressed in a costume made by a volunteer seamstress). "Saint Nick" gave out toys to each child, and a magician did tricks. Friends of the Society contributed ration coupons so that every little guest had plenty of hot chocolate, cakes and candy—undreamed-of treats. The Burgomaster was there, and the American Ambassador and Mrs. Hornbeck, who joined the children in singing *Silent Night* in Dutch and English.

Stellita Renchard's latest letter to Miss Merrick tells of the birth of a new baby to the Renchards and of the progress of Christ Child work at The Hague so far. The letter ends: "I believe that each of us, Protestant and Catholic, feels that the Christ Child has helped us as we in turn have tried to help spread His Name and Work."

# Toward a rural Catholicism

William J. Gibbons

Father William Gibbons, S.J., who represented the National Catholic Rural Life Conference at the congressional hearings on the acreage-limitation controversy of Central Valley, Calif., attended the recent meeting of the Conference in Lafayette, Louisiana, November 23-26.

Not without considerable forethought, the National Catholic Rural Life Conference chose the Evangeline country of Louisiana for the scene of its silver jubilee convention. For there, in the region surrounding Lafayette, may still be found Catholic descendants of those Acadians who form one of the few authentic links American Catholicism still retains with Europe's historic rural culture. By meeting in such surroundings at this time of world unrest, the NCRLC hoped to draw more attention to the vital connection that exists between souls and soil, between the Church and the land.

There is reason for concern. With prodigal disregard for their own future, American Catholics, by and large, have gone urban in a big way. Forgetting the lessons of history, recent and remote, these confirmed urbanites elaborately attempt the fruitless task of building a Christian culture without roots in the soil. After allowing the deadening and secularist philosophy of *laissez-faire* to run its course in urban industrial life, the majority of Catholics now seem well content to stand by while American agriculture goes materialist and denies its traditional religious background. They have not interpreted aright the signs of the times.

Some economists and sociologists in our urban-minded Catholic colleges may readily accept the proletarianization and collectivization of American agriculture as the logical working-out of economic laws. This would hardly be surprising, inasmuch as certain outstanding Catholic universities are known to harbor, even at this late date, professors who de-emphasize any connection between moral science and economic life. The NCRLC takes no such secularist viewpoint, but continues to urge unceasingly that the ethical values inherent in family living, property ownership and stewardship of the land be given the attention they deserve in all economic planning and thinking. At its recent Lafayette convention the Conference pledged itself to redouble its efforts toward this end.

The better to express its aspirations for family life on the land, NCRLC had a special prayer written for the occasion of the twenty-fifth convention. Entitled "Dedication of the Rural Family to the Divine Majesty," this flowing prayer summed up the attitudes that might be expected of a Christian aware that the soil is one of God's most basic gifts. It read in part:

Almighty and merciful Father, whom Thine only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ hast named the Husbandman, or Farmer, graciously accept our praise and adoration. All things were made by Thee and all that we have is Thine. Our lives and our talents, our home and its furnishings, the soil and its fruits, the animals and their abode, sunshine and rain, fruitage and harvest are all from Thee. By their use we are to come more securely unto Thee. We humbly beseech Thee to look with favor upon

this Thy family and to sanctify its members. Bless also our home, our flocks and herds, our fields and labors. . . Grant us through [Mary's] intercession, we beseech Thee, the grace so to pass through things temporal that we may not lose those which are eternal. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The foregoing prayer stresses values which NCRLC considers basic in any Christian culture: the primacy of the family in the social structure; widespread ownership of productive property, especially of land; the sacredness of the individual person, called as he is to a supernatural vocation; esteem for natural resources, more particularly the soil, which God has given us to supply our earthly needs; the reasoned subordination of temporal interests and concerns to those which are eternal. And at the center of all is Christ, Himself the Vine giving life to the branches, who through His teaching and grace makes possible the utilization by men of the good earth and all it produces in praise of the Creator.

But may not such attitudes be presupposed in American Catholics, especially in view of our extensive educational system? The NCRLC thinks not. To demonstrate the point, it draws attention to certain disturbing factors which indicate that American Catholicism is excessively urban not only in its place of residence but also in its outlook.

According to a recent survey made under the auspices of NCRLC, there are but 6,000 Catholic parishes or established missions in towns or communities under 2,500. (That is the mark set by the Bureau of the Census as the dividing line between rural and urban communities.) Yet in the year 1940 there were 13,286 incorporated communities of under 2,500, and 47,902,896 people living in the open country or outside incorporated communities. Our existing rural effort is scarcely adequate to cope with the needs of practising Catholics outside the cities, let alone reclaim lapsed ones or make converts from among the thousands of rural unchurched.

Many are now acquainted with the map indicating the "No-Priest Land" of one-third our U.S. counties, as drawn up by Father W. Howard Bishop, founder of the growing Home Missioners of America. Yet in not a few of the remaining two-thirds of the 3,000 U.S. counties, only one or two priests may be found. Clearly, despite its numerous clergy and developed institutions, the American Catholic Church is quite inadequately distributed to meet the needs of the people. Without the fact being generally appreciated, some of the very conditions cited by Father John J. Considine of Maryknoll, in his *Call for Forty Thousand*, might be found duplicated within our national boundaries. If they indicate the need for missionary activity in Latin America, their counterpart certainly calls for the same thing here.



Already in many countries of the world, certain mission fields excepted, Catholic leadership has manifested a distressing propensity for ignoring the hinterland. By surrendering almost wholeheartedly to the urbanizing tendency which accompanied industrialization, Catholics let slip their great chances for permanent growth in both numbers and culture. Certainly up to the present they have missed the historical opportunity for synthesis and coordination of industrial development and family life on the land. The leadership in this effort has been left to others, not always possessed of the spiritual insight Catholics are expected to have.

Should, therefore, this sensate culture of ours succeed in destroying itself—a thing not unlikely, even apart from the atom bomb and bacteriological warfare—we Catholics as a group can hardly claim to have exerted a significant force in the opposite direction. For despite all our insistence on moral values, we have paid but slight attention to the really important point, namely, application of sound spiritual principles to the entire socio-economic problem of the day. This of necessity includes the future of agriculture, proper use of the soil, and family life on the land. These we have thus far chosen to ignore. Yet apart from the land there can be no integral social philosophy.

At this point, I anticipate a whispered protest that recent Popes have touched on such points in encyclicals and pronouncements. They have by no means confined themselves to discussion of urban industrial problems but have made clear the primacy of ownership and stewardship of the land. To which answer may be made, that although a few far-seeing Catholics have taken up the papal challenge and busied themselves with constructive work in rural areas, the attitudes and prejudices of the majority indicate an acute case of urbanization. Principles are one thing, practice another. No papal encyclical, of itself, ever yet stopped a field from eroding or kept a family on the land when economic insecurity or the urban pull would draw it away. For these things men are needed.

All this leads to the important question of preparing Catholic rural leaders. Unfortunately the educational situation only confirms the thesis about the urbanization of American Catholicism. On the collegiate and university level, the directories reveal no agricultural school, or even department, under Catholic auspices. The State agricultural colleges and a few private universities enjoy a monopoly.

Agricultural schools on the secondary level, devoting full time to the subject, can be numbered on the fingers of one hand. The few we have are only beginning, and the securing of teachers presents a serious problem. In some places curriculum requirements and teacher supply do not make possible even courses on farming and homemaking for future farmers and farmers' wives. And the inadequacy of preparation for non-farm rural living becomes manifest when we consider the continued concentration of Catholics in urban areas.

Many professional educators will feel, of course, that agriculture is a technical subject best left to land-grant

colleges supplied with liberal funds. This is to miss the point. Leaving aside the question of strictly technical research in agriculture, there still remain numerous related areas which we cannot afford to neglect. One is the practical preparation of youth for a Christian life on the land. Another is the study of land problems, including tenure, tax policies, regulation of ownership, conservation and allied aspects. Still another is research into rural family living, rural-urban population trends, population problems, industrial decentralization. Can we afford not to be proficient in these topics? Can we go to support the laissez-faire thesis that morals and economics do not mix, and leave the economics to those outside the faith?

There is a certain sinister significance in the absence of Catholics from farm economics gatherings and from agricultural and rural leadership generally. The author has been too often embarrassed on this point to be any longer disinterested. Nor can he forget the requests of Catholic youths looking for training in practical farming, dairying and like subjects, under auspices which would teach them how to live as well as how to make a living. It was hard to explain that our Catholic educational system had not yet discovered the land or the family.

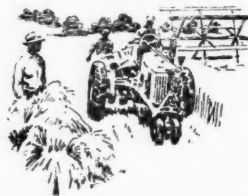
Discussing this situation at Lafayette, the National Catholic Rural Life Conference felt it necessary to express regret at the present situation. From the floor a resolution was presented and passed. It read:

There exists a serious need for agricultural schools under Catholic auspices. Practical schools of agriculture, with residence facilities, are necessary for the training of boys of secondary-school age. Moreover, it is desirable that Catholic colleges and universities provide courses and opportunities for research in agriculture, rural sociology and allied topics. The NCRLC recommends that educators give more attention to this pressing need.

Indications exist that attitudes toward family life on the land are changing in Catholic institutions of learning. The progress, however, is slow, and not infrequently students outstrip urban-minded teachers and administrators in their thinking.

The land and rural family living stand in grave need of Christian cultural influence. They need the steady application of minds thoroughly trained in the Christian tradition and in the social sciences as well. We can no longer assume that all education under Catholic auspices is integrally Christian in this regard.

For lack of a practical synthesis of sound moral principles and accurate knowledge of farm economics, rural sociology and soil conservation, both the land and the rural family are wasting away. Land ownership becomes more and more concentrated, not merely in efficient family farming units—to which no one could object—but in large corporation farms, which means only the proletarianization of our rural people. In the name of free



enterprise, we are doing what Russia does on behalf of collectivization.

The migratory farm-labor problem, so peculiarly Catholic inasmuch as many of the migrants are of Mexican origin, challenges us as never before. There, if anywhere, social and economic conditions bring to bear the full force of their impact upon family life.

In the face of these problems, the National Catholic Rural Life Conference does not intend to sit idly by. It invites Catholic interest in the preservation of our natural resources of land, basing its plea on the Christian concepts of stewardship and social justice. It urges prompt establishment of Catholic schools to teach practical agriculture to our youth. It asks a rethinking of rural school curricula and teacher preparation. It hopes

## Background for the British crisis

**Michael P. Fogarty**

The developments of the last few weeks in British economic policy have at least proved that it is difficult to get to a destination without knowing where it is. It is not, of course, that there is any uncertainty about the problems immediately ahead. There is the balance of payments, which is still showing a heavy deficit; and there is inflation. It was officially estimated this spring that £7,000 million of money were chasing £6,000 million of goods and services, and the gap has certainly not been closed. Price controls and rationing have helped to cushion the consumer; but the influence of inflation has made itself felt throughout industry in reluctance to export and in difficulty in attracting workers to key trades, as well as in falling stocks, bottlenecks in supplies of materials and equipment, and a desperate struggle to find a way under, over, around or through the official controls; of which, of course, inflation is itself a main cause.

Some controls, such as that on industrial-paper supplies, are little more than irritating and ineffective tangles of red tape. In the effort to escape ineffectiveness, other controls, such as the steel control, have swollen dropically and collapsed. Others were long ago cracked wide open. In certain trades, such as building, black marketeering of a kind almost impossible to check is flourishing today on a diet of surplus income, in a way unknown during the war. Knowledge of that fact is not helping national—and particularly industrial—morale. And, outside the rationed sector, even the ordinary consumer sometimes wonders whether he would lose much by having a little less money in return for a good deal more choice in the shops.

Nor is there much doubt about what ought to be done to meet these problems. Two years of the Labor Government have converted even socialist economists into Liberals, if not perhaps into Conservatives; and economists

that land-settlement groups, to assist Catholic families wanting to find a place on the land, will be established under Catholic auspices. It gives its full support to current efforts at soil conservation. It expresses the desire that Christian family living on the land may receive the attention it deserves, and which up to the present it has not received.

The NCRLC cannot, of course, achieve its objectives without the wholehearted support of all Catholics who think of our socio-economic problem as a whole, and not merely as so many isolated factors. The Conference knows, however, that the job is worth doing, and that encourages it to hope that the American Church will soon give to rural problems and agriculture the attention they deserve.

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today are proclaiming, almost with one voice, that the first step must be to cut at the roots of inflation. Export targets, production drives and so forth, are all very well. But what hope have they of success while any firm can sell any product at almost any price in a swollen home market? A smooth flow of production, a rapid turnover of plants and workers to serve key customers, a bigger choice of goods in the shops to stimulate higher output and earnings, and the elimination of controls and the black market all depend on bringing demand nearer to equality with supply.

Something has certainly been done to meet the economists' claims, and this month's Interim Budget was at any rate a step in the right direction. But, as the *Economist* has pointed out, it went only about two-thirds of the way towards closing the *additional* inflationary gap which is likely to appear next year, and no way at all towards closing the gap which exists already. Admittedly there is room for argument about where further cuts should be made. Not everyone would accept the extreme position taken by an Oxford economist, R. F. Harrod, whose book, *Are These Hardships Necessary?* was completed in three red-hot weeks of August holiday and published, by some miracle of private enterprise, early last month. Mr. Harrod's basic demand is that capital expenditure should be cut back till it equals current savings, the latter being taken as given. That is perhaps a little too much like mortgaging the future for the sake of the present. There is, it may be suspected, as good a case for cutting back consumption and releasing resources for investment as for doing the opposite. But, whatever the precise point at which the cuts are to come, come they certainly must; for this particular hardship is accepted by expert opinion as very necessary, indeed.

Why has the Government responded so poorly to appeals on these lines? It is certainly not because of igno-

rance. The Treasury and Cabinet secretariat are not staffed by morons. Nor is it because of the Ministers' incapacity. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer was rightly regarded, because of his cheap-money policy, as the architect of inflation. But his successor is Sir Stafford Cripps, who could be trusted, if he felt inclined that way, to deliver a dose of financial castor oil with the same grim virtuosity which he displayed in his previous office. Certainly it is true that no politician likes to impose cuts, an attitude not unknown on the far side of the Atlantic. But the Labor Party is realizing more and more, with some help from last month's Tory landslide in the municipal elections, that strong leadership may also pay. In the face of growing national irritation over the results of inflation, half measures may actually do—and are very obviously doing—more to wreck politicians' popularity than going the whole hog.

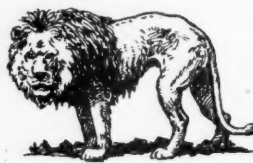
The real trouble seems to lie deeper. Sacrifices could be imposed right and left during the war for two main reasons. One, which still applies, was that the urgency of the situation was generally agreed on. The other, which does not apply, was that wartime economic measures were recognized as strictly temporary. No doubt everyone realized that not all the wartime changes would be reversed. But the general attitude was symbolized by the Restoration of Pre-War Trade Practices Act of 1942, which decreed in effect that the pre-war position on the class-war front should be re-established at the end of hostilities. Today, by contrast, the feeling is that what are officially only temporary changes will often prove to have come to stay. The present economic strain on Great Britain, unlike the war, has no very definite end ahead of it. And monkeying about with the peacetime economy is suspected, perhaps not always logically, of being likely to lead to more permanent distortions than the much more far-reaching experiments tried out in the special conditions of war.

The result has inevitably been a high degree of class suspicion and of jockeying for advantageous positions. Large sections of the working class, including those who have most to say for themselves, are honestly convinced that talk about deflation, or about limiting wage competition between more and less essential industries, springs from a plot to force them back to the conditions of insecurity and subordination from which they suffered in the 'twenties and 'thirties. Large sections of the middle class are equally convinced that the introduction of direction of labor—in deference to the trade unions—instead of a wages policy and deflation represents, not merely temporary surrender to powerful political interests, but a new way of thinking about such matters which is neither good politics nor good economics.

They think much the same about the Government's reluctance, even in the clearest cases, to scrap administrative controls which hamper the manager's and technician's initiative and to substitute a smoother control through finance. And the withdrawal of the ordinary motorist's petrol ration, at a time when the non-motoring majority continues merrily to smoke imported tobacco, luxuriate in imported films and convert corn into alcohol,

is understandably interpreted as pure class legislation. Class-conscious workers, observing the middle-class reaction, are more confirmed than ever in their suspicions. So the vicious circle rolls on; and Ministers, though wakened by the municipal elections to the middle-class menace to their own political prospects, have so far failed to see their way out.

All would, of course, be well if there were some clear national understanding on just where the economic system is heading—provided, that is, the destination looked reasonably satisfactory to both the middle class and labor. And a long-term national policy which meets this condition does seem gradually to be emerging. It can be traced in the reports of the Trades Union Congress and the Federation of British Industries, as well as in many of the Government's actions and in the reports of official committees of inquiry; notably in those of the Working Parties, including employers' and trade-union as well as official representatives, initiated in 1945 to overhaul the set-up of some fifteen key industries. (Cf. *AMERICA*, May 17 and September 27, 1947)



It is not strictly a free-enterprise policy, though it relies very heavily on market forces. Neither is it a policy which will, or does, make much appeal to the zealots of socialism. It represents an integration of the best features of laborite claims with those of the liberal counter-attack, which is now vigorously developing. And it looks like coming reasonably close to satisfying both the labor demand for high and stable employment and fair distribution, and the demand of the middle class for freedom to purchase, freedom to choose a job and produce, and freedom for the manager and the technician to get on with their own business.

But how long will it take for this policy to reach conscious expression in Ministers' statements? Or for the different sections of the public to become convinced, not merely that such a policy exists, but that it is genuinely likely to be carried out?

## Looking ahead

FATHER GERALD ELLARD, S.J., internationally known authority on the liturgy, contributes a discussion of the most recent encyclical by His Holiness Pope Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*.

WALTER DUSHNYCK, in "The education of an American liberal," analyzes the recent book by Hal Lehrman, *Russia's Europe*, an account of the shattering of the Soviet utopian dream for an honest liberal.

FRANK RILEY reports the plans of world intellectuals for the promotion of international understanding and welfare, which were formulated at the meeting of UNESCO in Mexico City in November of 1947.

VERA GIBIAN presents the spiritual odyssey of a great anti-nazi German, as revealed in the *War Diaries* of Theodor Haeker.



# Literature & Art

## Could He come unto His own?

**Harold C. Gardiner**

He had been interested in them ever since he saw them waiting in the tube station across the river. They were evidently a couple from up in the country, evidently Jewish, and evidently going down into the big city for the first time. Noel Shepherd, cop though he was, still had a warm spot in his heart for people, and the quiet dignity and protectiveness of the man, the lovely poise of the girl, far on in pregnancy, drew him strongly—after all, he had four children of his own. He knew his wife was much like the girl opposite him; he hoped he gave somewhat the same impression as the man.

He deliberately took a place in the subway where he could see them. He even hoped that he would be able to hear a little of what they said. No, there was no idea of snooping—he just thought maybe he'd be able to help. Twenty years on the Force give a guy a little know-how about the ropes, and it was a sure thing they were going into a city that was strange to them.

But when they got off in the big city, he wasn't any the wiser. They hadn't said much, just a few quiet words to one another; so he stood watching them a little, as they looked around bewilderedly at the crowds, trying to pick the right exit from the station. He hadn't much time before checking in, but he couldn't leave them like that, so he went up and said: "Look, folks, I'm not trying to butt in, but I happen to be a cop here and perhaps I can give you a good steer. Is there somebody you want to get in touch with or somethin'?"

Yes, there was. They were planning to stay with friends for a day or so, until it was time to go to the hospital. Did they know how to get to the friends' home? No, they had never been in the big city before. Well, why didn't they save themselves a lot of bother and let him give the friends a buzz and see if they were home and expecting the out-of-towners. What was their number? OK, he'd call them and be back in a flash. "You just sit there, lady, and be easy for a while, and if I have to, I'll get a squad car for you."

He was back in a flash, but with no soap. Friends didn't answer. Did they have any place for the night? No, and not enough money for any decent hotel. Well, they couldn't sit in a lousy tube station all night; they were tired already and she particularly needed her rest.

"Say," he said, "it doesn't sound so hot, but actually there's a municipal garage not far from here. This is a slim night for it—there won't be many of the drivers

hangin' around—and it's pretty clean and the manager, a pal of mine, can give you the little extra rest-room he's got where you'll be kinda private. How about me takin' you over there until you can contact your friends tomorrow?"

The man and the girl exchanged a look of complete and unspoken understanding. It sort of looked as though this was just what they had been waiting for.

"Thank you, officer," said the man quietly, "my wife and I are very grateful for what you—and He—are doing for us."

What in the world did the "and He," said so confidently, mean, thought Shepherd? After all, I'm the guy who's doing the work—how does this He get into it?

Returning from an accident case about one A.M., Shepherd found himself walking along the street on which the garage was. He'd been so busy the past few hours he'd let the strangely attractive couple fade a little from his mind since he'd seen them as comfortable as could be in the shabby little rest-room. "I wonder how they're doin'," thought Shepherd.

He quickened his steps a little, and it was strange how his heart quickened, too. But before he came to the entrance to the garage, his gaze picked up a brightening glow at the intersection beyond. Some stupid guy parked with his road-lights full on, probably. Let's take a look.

No, no road lights. Instead, a half-dozen fellows standing under the street light. And all dressed in white—was it white tails like the dancers you saw in the movies, or was there a suggestion of white flowing robes? Shepherd could never remember because, as he got close, he almost forgot to look for listening. They were singing. He'd never heard a thing like it. It was out of this world (later he remembered how true that was).

He was still gawking like a hick and listening like a guy waiting for his bingo combination to be called, when he got a sharp elbow in the ribs. A little crowd had collected, and the person beside him was a small, waspish old lady.

"Officer," she parroted, "you have to put a stop to this, right away."

"Huh? But why, lady? They ain't makin' any ruckus. They're singin' sorta quiet—and one thing sure, they ain't drunk or they couldn't sing like that."

"Then it's evident you haven't been attending to *what* they're singing. Perhaps you don't understand the words; some are Latin and some are not but, if my ears are good—and I don't wear any hearing-aid, though I'm going on seventy-eight—*what* they are singing is definitely religious—religious, mind you, on a public street in the United States."

"OK, lady, so it's religious. What's wrong with that?"

It's better than if they were singin' somethin' bawdy, isn't it?"

"Don't be nasty-minded, officer—and that's not the point, anyway. The point is, if you ever studied civics in school, or even to get on the Force, the point is that this street is paved by the city, and they get the money to pave the streets from taxes, and that's from public funds, and the same public money pays to light this very corner, and you police, though I don't know what good you do, you're paid, too, from public money. I'm one who helps pay for all of this, and I don't believe in religion, and I, for one, won't have my good money go to protect and illuminate people who stand around on street corners and sing about religion. We have separation of Church and State here, or have you ever heard of it? Furthermore—and I have your number—if you *don't* do something about it, I'll take steps first thing in the morning to have the District Attorney—and I have influence with him, because I'm a member of the League for the Protection of Civil Rights—see that your Captain speaks to you. *Now*, will you stop gawking and clear the streets of these street-entertainers who are clearly violating the Constitution of the United States?"

"But, lady, I was listenin' and all I hear is that they are singin' about somebody's birthday. What's wrong about singin' to celebrate a birthday?"

"Yes, yes, yes; I heard that, too, but it's some sort of religious birthday. Hear that? They just sang, 'Glory to God?' And that makes it all the worse, because if this is the first birthday, they'll be here again every year. It's better to stop it now. It's not only better; you have to, it's your duty."

Well, what the pot, thought Shepherd. I don't know, maybe the old dame has somethin'; anyway, she'll be yapping in my ear all night if I don't do somethin', and they look like sensible guys, so. . .

"Pardon me, boys, but you know this is a public street, and the taxpayers . . . well, anyway, we've got separation of Church and. . . Hey, where are they? Wasn't they here when I started to talk to them? . . . Did you folks see. . . ?"

For there was nothing on the corner save a few people staring stupidly around, the dim street lamp glowering, and the old lady coming back to the attack on a puzzled Shepherd.

"Now, officer," she shrilled, "that's a good start, but I heard them in their outlandish song referring to some sort of religious business that's going on in the municipal garage down there, and if that's true. . ."

"OK, lady, I know by now. The city maintains the joint, and we got separation of Church and State and. . ."

"Precisely, young man."

"But if there's anything religious-like goin' on in that garage, I don't know religion from nothin'. Why, there was nobody in there at all a couple hours ago except Barney Pafski the manager—and I know he ain't religious—and couple of strangers I took in there, a man

and his wife, who's goin' to be a mother pretty soon. . ."

"Why, that's it! She is a mother already. Weren't they singing about a birthday? Now, officer, if you don't. . ."

"For Pete's sake, lady, lay off me. I can't do anything tonight, and I wouldn't if I could. It just wouldn't be human to rouse them out now, and besides, I'm only a cop; I gotta talk to the Captain about all this."

"Well, *don't* think you can cut me off. I'll be around in the morning later, and if you and your superiors haven't done *something* to uphold our great American and democratic principle of separation of Church and State. . ."

"Aw, nuts," thought Shepherd, as he left the shrill voice still yammering under the street light, "wantin' to throw a little baby out on the street because the state wants to have nothin' to do with religion! Well, anyway, maybe early after it gets light, I'd better see if I can get the three of them out to my brother's place in the country. They won't be livin' on public funds there, except maybe if the place catches fire, the fire department (because ain't that supported by taxes?) wouldn't put it out as long as this baby, who's got somethin' to do with religion, is in it. Aw, nuts—I wonder if the baby is as nice as the father and specially the mother seemed to be?"

While all this was happening in the big city, three citizens of a foreign country, Messrs. Balthasar, Melchior and Caspar, were in the United States Consul's office in their capital city trying to get entry visas into the United States. The discussion had apparently gone on for quite a while, for all three natives and the American Consul looked a little frayed in patience. The difference was that the three were frayed and despondent; the Consul was frayed but primly and officially triumphant.

"So, you see, gentlemen," he was saying, "my Government, which has the most absolute and unshakable respect for freedom of conscience and religion—all sorts and kinds of religions, mind you—can take no public action which may be interpreted as favoring religion, especially any particular religion. This young—er, infant, I think you said?—while of course much too young to start any kind of religious movement, still may be, later, if not now, the center around which some sort of definite religious activity may crystallize; you know how easily people, even in this enlightened day when illiteracy is practically unknown in the United States, will flock to some superstition or other. The very fact that you are . . . ah . . . convinced that you *must* visit his birthplace because of some strange conjunction of the stars—and I'm sure our new telescope at Palomar will soon solve *that*—you've heard of the telescope, haven't you—the biggest in the world? Well, as I was saying, the mere fact of that . . . er . . . ah . . . miracle, joined to the fact that the United States had granted you an official visa to enter for *that* . . . er . . . ah . . . religious purpose, would con-



stitute a clear violation of a fundamental American doctrine, enshrined in the Constitution. According to that doctrine, we have separation of Church and . . ."

A little later, in the big city, Mayor Harrod was addressing his aldermen. They, the city fathers, had just taken a vote and unanimously passed a city order. His Honor was commending them on their civic virtue.

"And so, gentlemen," he wound up, "posterity will be grateful to you for having upheld, in our fair city—I think I may say in all modesty the greatest in the world—a great American doctrine. Incredible as it may seem, this young . . . uh . . . infant whose presence in the city and its environs we have been debating, and who has caused such perturbation to a body of highly respected citizens represented by the League for the Protection of Civil Rights, and who has, moreover, still more incredibly caused the State Department no little embarrassment because of the importunity of several foreigners on the matter of obtaining visas—this young . . . uh . . . infant, as I was saying, clearly must leave the State. His presence here, where he would be protected by the police, the fire department, served by our water system, and so on and so on—all these, mind you, provided by public funds and taxes—that presence, I say, would be a clear violation, to which I could not be a party, of the great

American and democratic doctrine of the separ— . . ." Some time later, Officer Shepherd happened to be stationed on one of the bridges that led out of the city and out of the State. In the headlights of a car that stopped to pay toll, he saw quite clearly the man and the girl walking quietly and proudly in the direction of the other State.

The car pulled out in a cloud of gas. Shepherd pushed his hat back, rubbed his hands together for warmth, and wrinkled his forehead.

"Gee," he thought, "they were nice people. I hope she has the baby wrapped up warm. I wonder if the baby is as nice as them. This separation of Church and State business is queer stuff. If what they say about it is true, how're those three goin' to be able to stay in *any* State? Looks to me like separation of Church and State, if it's what they say, means separation of man and man. I must be gettin' religious myself, for I was just goin' to say it looks like separation of man from God."

Anyway—was his final thought as another car came slowing up and the pair walking and the little one in arms passed beyond the glow of lights—anyway, I hope they come again, and this time with some place to stay.

Only it wasn't Officer Shepherd's final thought on the matter. He had that same thought often, very often.

### *Madonna*

I dreamed I was the Bethlehem host  
Lending an arm to aid  
Over the courtyard to the barn  
The blessedly-burdened Maid.

I remember the rhythm of the night  
And the heavens' anointed face,  
The concern of Joseph for Mary,  
And her exceeding grace.

One flowered hand upon her breast  
Guardian I recall;  
Her lips love-sealed, abloom with prayer,  
And the great peace over all.

And how, their comfort made, I raised  
My lamp on the scene a while,  
And how it died, as stars at dawn,  
From a lovelier light—her smile.

A. E. JOHNSON

### *Christmas song*

"What's the good news this wintry day?"

Shepherd asked shepherd.

"Early this morning, down Bethlehem way,  
A Galilee woman, Mary, they say,  
Gave birth to a baby.

"In the hills where the little flocks lay last night,  
Watched by the shepherds,

An angel appeared appareled in white  
That kindled the skies to a blaze of light  
(All this for a baby?)

"And the angel bade them without delay—

All good shepherds—  
To hasten to where the little child lay  
Swaddled in linen, cradled on hay,  
And watched by the lady."

*These the Good Tidings; this the Good Spell*

To us and the shepherds:  
The new-born Child is Emmanuel,  
God-with-us, the Christ. Sing Him Noel,  
Noel to the Baby.

CONRAD DIEKMANN

### *Baby-cry*

Miriam is tiny-white  
Like a bike-lamp in the night,  
But her cry is not so small,  
Ringing down a heated hall  
When day-paining men are deep  
In their opium den of sleep.  
And since she is her father's riches,  
He must arise and grope for switches;  
Then while the soothing whiteness heats,  
Against his ears her sweet wail beats,  
Reminding him of God's small Son  
Who cried for milk like any one,  
Who did not have a heated hall,  
But came to save us  
One and all.

JOSEPH DEVER



## Books

### Theme makes for permanence

#### FISHERS OF MEN

By Maxence van der Meersch. Sheed & Ward. 272p. \$3

#### THE PURPLE PLAIN

By H. E. Bates. Little, Brown (An Atlantic Monthly Press Book). 308p. \$2.75

Both these books have as their theme a quest for peace and security; the first has its scene in industrial northern France (it might just as well be the industrial towns of any country), and treats of the peace and security the workers need but, in a large measure, do not have, and which a Catholic movement is trying to give them; the second is set in Burma, and deals with the interior peace of soul that finally comes to a bitter, fatalistic British airman. They are, however, poles apart, for the first book, despite obvious and irritating defects, is charged with a passionate sincerity and urgency that the second, despite obvious excellence, does not approximate.

Perhaps it is rather unfair to make the comparison, for the two books fall under different genres. *Fishers of Men* labors from the defect that it cannot quite make up its mind whether it is straight or fictionalized biography or out-and-out tract. *The Purple Plain* is fiction, and makes no suggestion of being anything more.

M. van der Meersch has given us a strangely fascinating book. A young worker who becomes a member of the *Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne* (the Jocists), tells his story. It is both appalling and glorious: appalling in its revelation of the misery of the working class, the machinations of the Communists, the hypocrisy of not a few "Catholic" employers; but glorious in the spirit of human compassion and zeal for justice and the truly Christ-like charity which animates the young Christian workers whose avowed purpose is to be other Christs at the lathe, behind the counter, in the mines.

This story is told with a frankness that is, at times, almost brutal. It is told, further, with a certain naïveté that amounts to a defect, but which turns out to be rather charming: it is the ingenuousness with which these young apostles keep referring to them-

selves as "fishers of men," those who have come "to save that which was lost," etc. Undoubtedly they are, but it would have been better art to let the reader draw that conclusion for himself. At the same time, however, it is part of the crusading spirit that makes the telling zestful.

The characters are rugged and real, but Peter Mardyck, who tells the story, fades into insignificance compared to some of the magnificent heroes he describes. American readers may be inclined to think that all this has little application to conditions here; but it must be remembered that if our working conditions are, by and large, better, we still have a fight on our hands for the Christianizing of the worker. This book is a magnificent challenge to all Catholics interested in labor and its problems.

The protagonist of *The Purple Plain* is a British flyer who lost his wife of a few hours in a London blitz and who from then on courted death. With nothing to live for, as he thought, he took the most impossible chances and, his goal always eluding him, became morose, bitter, on the verge of a breakdown, if not of insanity. Added to his



mental agony was the physical distress of the shimmering, maddening heat of the Burmese plain.

Taken by a jovial fellow-officer to help in an infirmary for the natives, he meets a young Burmese girl; in the serenity and simplicity of her nature he finds the peace he thought was gone for good. There is, perhaps, the suggestion throughout the work that the sophisticated, the highly civilized (in our Western sense of the word) can find strength and comfort in the more impassive, less complicated elements of another culture.

Mr. Bates writes with great felicity, especially when he catches the mood and atmosphere of exotic Eastern nature—the egrets, the lizards, the lush

foliage as backdrop to the pagodas and the little village oases. He is less successful with character, or at least with his main characters. The girl, who has to be most believable to be believable at all, is unconvincingly neutral. Minor characters, including an army nurse who swears like a trooper to cover her femininity, are more genuine.

There is a rather classic description of a trek, when the hero, forced to a crash landing with two companions, makes his way (carrying one wounded man on his shoulders) across an arid waste back to safety. This is the most successful episode in the book.

*The Purple Plain* is far and away a better written book than *Fishers of Men*. One reads it with conscious appreciation that here is a man who can truly write. But I venture to say that the vivid Burmese scene will have faded from your memory when the drab lot of the French workers is still etched disturbingly on your mind. So much does the depth of a theme make for permanence in literature. If only *Fishers of Men*, with its theme, had been written with the finished craftsmanship of *The Purple Plain*, it would have been a masterpiece. HAROLD C. GARDINER

### Sanctity the spring

#### HUMANIST AS HERO: The Life of Sir Thomas More

By Theodore Maynard. Macmillan. 261p. \$3

Theodore Maynard's particular gift as a biographer is a faculty for unifying a mass of heterogeneous material into a swiftly moving narrative in which quotation, critical evaluation of the work of other biographers, and interpretation are woven as a single fabric. The result is usually an eminently readable study. To this latest book he brings, in addition, a profound sympathy with his subject, for one cannot fail to sense the sympathy and understanding on every page. Like More, English and Catholic, and like More a married man who before marriage lived the monastic life long enough for its influence to have left its permanent mark, Maynard can enter into and interpret the unity of More's many-faceted life because he knows the source of that unity.

In common with all who have written of Saint Thomas More since 1935, Maynard recognizes his debt to R. W. Chambers' great biography. It is no depreciation of Maynard to recognize that his study will not replace Cham-

bers'. Scholars will continue to use the latter's fuller documentation and his invaluable critical survey of sources and of the whole More tradition. They will continue to see in Chambers' book a sustained meditation on the meaning of More's life by a scholar who, while not sharing More's faith, understands profoundly More's significance in English history.

Maynard's book will be valuable, however, both for scholarly and general readers, not only because it combines sound scholarship with enthusiasm for the subject, but because it offers certain fresh personal insights. The organization of the book is admirable, as are the chapter titles, which adhere to the inner psychological unity of More's development without departing too much from chronology. The one notable exception is Chapter XV, "Chancellor No More"—the pun is true to More's spirit, and his love for the sheer play of language—which begins abruptly with More's resignation, although it is not until twenty pages later that we learn the complete story of the events that preceded More's decision.

Chambers, writing on More and the punishment of heretics (p. 279), says that in More's twelve years as Chancellor there was not one death sentence for heresy in the Diocese of London. Maynard (p. 181) says that there were three. Such disagreements on points of fact are infrequent; elsewhere there are disagreements as to interpretation, but they are almost invariably minor.

The title of Theodore Maynard's book suggests perfectly the role that Saint Thomas More can play today in the revival of Christian humanism. In his *True Humanism* (1938), Jacques Maritain asks whether it is possible to have a humanism fed from the heroic springs of sanctity. Is an heroic humanism possible? Maritain's answer is "yes," and he makes the suggestive comment that it is primarily on their answer to this question, and on the grounds for their answer, that men take their various positions relative to the travail of history taking place before our eyes. Since the dawn of the Renaissance, he argues—in other words, since the time of More—the Western world has passed from an order of dedicated and Christian heroism to one of humanism; but Western humanism springs from religious and transcendental sources, whereas liberal-bourgeois humanism has largely repudiated its Christian inspiration. "Against this materialized spirituality," says Maritain,

"the active materialism of atheism and paganism has the game in its hands."

Theodore Maynard's biography makes clear the fact that More's "dedicated and Christian heroism" did not rule out the values of humanism. He shows that, on the contrary, it was because More was both Christian and humanist that his enthusiasm for the revival of learning went hand in hand with his vision, in *Utopia*, of a more just society.

A. S. RYAN

## Two on the orient world

### DANGER FROM THE EAST

By Richard Lauterbach. Harper. 386p. \$3.75.

Richard Lauterbach, able young *Time* and *Life* correspondent since 1941 and author of the pallid *These Are the Russians*, while the holder of a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard, completed the manuscript he now gives us dealing with his on-the-spot observations of American policy in Japan, Korea and China. His style is lively and engaging, and he combines historical analysis with a kind of smart reportorial writing

which contains much anecdotal material.

The first half of the book is devoted to a penetrating examination of the occupation of Japan under General MacArthur's leadership. While not the first account of the occupation which has dared to be critical, Lauterbach's is certainly the most extensive to date. He is by no means convinced that the job has been done as well as most people think it has. He is willing to admit that a good bit of first-rate groundwork has been laid, but that is as far as he will go. It is his deep-seated conviction that the Japanese have succeeded in pulling a good deal of wool over our eyes and that they will bear careful watching at all times. The watchman's task, however, ought not to be undertaken unilaterally by the United States. This is one of the weaknesses of our procedure in seeking to solve the Japanese problem, according to Lauterbach. We have forgotten that Japan is a world—and not an exclusively American—problem. The assignment should be handed over forthwith to a civilian commission under United Nations auspices.

MacArthur is described as the "world's most and worst press-agented

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General," who seemed to the author to be like the "headmaster of an Episcopal prep school" and "who has an Aimee Semple McPherson look in his eyes." He is, furthermore, "a paradoxical combination of the sublime and the ridiculous." Despite these snide remarks, Lauterbach is forced, albeit grudgingly, to admit that "on the big issues, he has demonstrated the fairness of a man above petty recriminations." One can see that, in spite of himself, the author has been deeply impressed by the General. Yet the impression he attempts to convey is not at all favorable to SCAP.

Moving over to Korea, Lauterbach begins to reveal his hand more openly. He is indeed on firm ground when he describes the occupation of that hapless land as "the Liberators' Conquest" and brands it "the Korean misadventure." Despite the fact that things have not gone very well, there can be little question in the mind of any objective individual that the chief culprit is Russia. Lauterbach pooh-poohs the idea of any North Korean Army trained by the Russians. Why else would they have made their recent offer to evacuate Korea, provided we did the same, unless they were quite sure that their puppets

would soon be able to terrorize the country and control it by brute force?

It is in the matter of the China policy of the United States that Lauterbach has his greatest field day. He professes to see nothing but failure in it, and berates Washington for even daring to support that pillar of reaction, Chiang Kai-shek. Admittedly, all is not well in the ranks of the Kuomintang, as General Marshall made abundantly clear following his unsuccessful mission to China, but it is equally obvious that the dangers to future world peace from the extremists of the Left, such as Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh, are far greater. Of the many writers who have been writing on China, only Freda Utey in her *Last Chance in China* has had the acumen to realize the truth. General Wedemeyer's recently concluded mission, while rightly critical of Kuomintang weaknesses, appears also to have reached this conclusion. How else interpret Marshall's request for \$300 million in aid to China? Mr. Lauterbach to the contrary, we may well be about to have our "last chance" in China.

With allowances for the shortcomings noted above, there is much that is worthwhile in *Danger from the East*. The author has touched on some sore spots which deserved it, but, on the whole, this reviewer, for one, feels that this kind of writing does more harm than good. It distinctly adds up to "playing the Russian game," whether intended or not.

THOMAS H. D. MAHONEY

#### LAST CHANCE IN CHINA

By Freda Utey. Bobbs-Merrill. 408p. \$3.50

This is the most important book on the Far East recently published. It is written as an antidote to what the accomplished and well-informed author calls "the Teddy White-Edgar Snow school which believed that the Communists were the hope of China" and to the attempts of our Government to secure a truce and cooperation between the Nationalists and the Communists there.

Such a truce, the author believes, would be fatal to the peace of the world and the eventual future of the United States. She sees and knows the defects of the Chiang Kai-shek Government, but says that, far from being fascist, it is weak because it is a compromise. Any union, she feels, of this Government with the Communists

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would result in a communist conquest of China, for Communists do not cooperate. They infiltrate, overthrow and seize.

These Chinese Communists she recognizes as agents of that Moscow communism which she personally knew in Russia. Through these Communists, she declares, "Russia today even more positively than Japan yesterday is threatening the complete destruction of American rights and interests in China." She adds: "We must cease listening to the siren voices which assure us that Chinese Communists are not real Communists." There stands China, in her eyes, "again the victim of power politics and the focus of world conflict." Russian control over China, the thesis runs, will give preponderance of manpower and resources, and America, "the hope of the world, but weak," would fall.

Many Americans have been deceived as to the true issue. The longer the deceit lasts, the greater the peril. Our "last chance in China" is slipping by; our attitude must change lest it be lost.

ELBRIDGE COLBY

#### THE DRY WOOD

By Caryl Houselander. Sheed & Ward. 257p. \$3

When Willie Jewel was about to be born in a London hospital, the doctors decided that either the mother, Martha, or the child would have to be allowed to die, and with Martha's consent they left the choice to her husband, Art. At Martha's urgent request, Art chose the child, and both mother and child survived, but Willie was an incurable cripple, doomed to pain and deprived even of the power of speech. For six years the little one lingered on amid the poverty of London slums, but the care of him brightened the lives of Art and Martha and provided an outlet for the ministering love of their neighbors. Father Malone, the parish priest, had been the apostle of the slums for fifty years, sharing the sorrows and misery of his people, and at his death he was hailed as a saint by his beloved flock. Willie at this time seemed nearer to death than ever before, and the people began to pray to Father Malone in heaven, not to cure the child, but to save his life so that the miracle might hasten the cause of Father Malone's canonization.

Such is the situation that furnishes the basis for the charming first novel of this talented author. Her previous

books have won her wide acclaim in the realm of spiritual writing, and she here shows the same rare ability to penetrate into the supernatural features of both the great and small affairs of life and to see the extension of our crucified Saviour in the trials and sufferings of men. Scope for the exercise of this ability is here found in tracing the reactions of numerous individuals to this situation. These reactions range widely not only among the devout parishioners but also among the clergy, some of whom urge the bishop to put a stop to this imprudent cult, while others join the people and encourage a novena to the holy pastor.

With deft fingers the author lays bare the secrets of hearts and then interprets them with spiritual reflections. These reflections, touching all-important phases of Catholic life from the Mass to the little acts of private mortification and skillfully weaving into the tale a wealth of scripture texts and liturgical practices, are worked out in a smoothly running style that lends notable charm and freshness to familiar truths.

The central theme is similar to that of the author's *This War Is the Passion*; human suffering gives men a share in the sufferings of Christ and draws them close to Him, and the weakness or pain of others awakens in the hearts of their neighbors a sympathy that gives body to the Christian principle of universal charity. Here a little child leads the whole neighborhood to the throne of grace in petition for his welfare, and love lives in the community, helping the people to forget their poverty and to feel the common bond of their brotherhood in Christ.

WILLIAM A. DOWD

## The Word

HILAIRE BELLOC, WRITING ON artistic inspiration, mentions one source of it which our blasé day might well overlook. Contemplating a statue, he muses: "what a good thing it would be if men were to return for inspiration to innocence"—which, he adds, has something far more substantial and solid than either the frenzied search for the new or involved invention. Many of the works which lift the human heart in a Wordsworthian leap of exultance, he declares, "have the particular quality of youth—I mean, of very

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early youth." Even George Moore, surprisingly enough, found modern painting dull and savorless because it had no "innocency" in it.

These thoughts, obviously, are suggested by Bethlehem, which is at once inexhaustibly inspirational and an immortal monument to innocence. Any mother and any child, in their mutual relationship of brooding love and helpless dependence, will induce in the hardened cynic a fleeting nostalgia for the days of his youth, the days of his innocence. But this virginal mother, spotless, sinless, radiant, and her small Son, the Divine Redeemer, constitute an ultimate challenge to any mind intelligent enough to apprehend the terms of the proposition that God became man in order that man might become God. Bethlehem is so blunt, so unequivocal, so embarrassingly clear in its implications, that no one can rest secure in his possession of a code of worldly principles there. Christ as the author of human life is also the supreme authority on it; and before the manger which encompasses Him whom the heavens cannot contain, one is bound to ask: What really matters? What basically is important? What, in the wintry light of this cattle shed, is the real perspective on such evasive and shifting notions as success, true wealth, genuine achievement?

The Eternal Word of God might have become man in any fashion He desired. He could have come in rolling thunders and confluent lightnings, in a reversal of Elias' fiery chariot, with ten million bugles braying and all creation fixed at attention in one reverberant "Alleluia." But the script of Christ's birth was written not in Hollywood but Heaven; He deliberately elected to come so quietly, so undistinguishedly, that very few people knew about it. The first who came to adore Him were shepherds and that, too, was richly significant. For in the old days of the patriarchs, the keeping of sheep had been the honorable occupation of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David; but it had fallen on bad times. At the time of Our Lord's birth, the nomadic, desert shepherds were a despised group; they lived far from the Temple, ignorant of the legal observances which the Pharisees accounted essential to salvation; they were suspected of thievery; put on a level with publicans; and their testimony was not acceptable in court. It was most fitting that the God who was born for the sick and the sinner, the underprivileged and the unknown, should have had as His first witnesses

those who would most benefit by His coming. He came to delight and encourage those who had retained their innocence, to deliver and sustain those who had lost theirs; innocence as inspiration produced its masterpiece at Bethlehem.

Kneel there in meditation during this Christmas octave and be inspired to greater faith, unshakable hope, profound love. Christ has made it easy for you to approach Him; there is no protocol, no ceremony; the accent is on accessibility. In the Office of St. Martin of Tours occurs the beautiful sentiment: "Our Lord Jesus Christ said not that He would come clad in purple or adorned with a crown." As an adult He would tell the inquiring multitudes that such "are in the houses of kings" (Matt. 11:8) and He would refuse their crown (John 6:15). From them and from us He wants only love. Looking at the small King of Heaven and His Queen, clad in that candent innocence whose reflected light shows us the devousness and darkness of our own souls, we should arise strongly determined to be more like Him who, by His birth, as St. Paul tells us, became our Brother. WILLIAM A. DONAGHY, S.J.

## Films

MY WILD IRISH ROSE. The screen writers assigned to immortalize Chauncey Olcott have displayed considerable ingenuity (not to be confused with subtlety) in highlighting the most enduring songs in his repertory with a little personal drama. Thus he charms a hostile Boston gathering (out on St. Patrick's night to hear the great Billy Scanlan) with *A Little Bit of Heaven*, sings *Mother Machree* to the appropriate audience of one (Sara Allgood) after his first triumph, and finally, on his wedding day, oblivious of a packed theatre, addresses the title song directly to his bride (an uncommonly pretty redhead, Arlene Dahl). Once having got over the fact that adding a slight brogue to his pleasant, trained voice does not turn Dennis Morgan into an Irish tenor, the family should find the musical portions of the film quite delightful. About the plot, compounded mostly of bogus Hibernian sentiment and elementary vaudeville humor, and bearing no conceivable resemblance to anyone's life story, the less said the better. (Warner Brothers)

# America's December Book-Log

10

## best-selling books

These books are reported by the stores below as having the best sales during the current month. The popularity is estimated both by the frequency with which the book is mentioned and by its relative position in the report.

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Boston	Plus XI Cooperative
Boston	45 Franklin Street
Buffalo	Mathew F. Sheehan Company
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Chicago	Catholic Union Store
Chicago	828 Main Street
Chicago	St. Thomas More Library and Book Shop
Chicago	33 Church Street
Chicago	Marshall Field & Co., Book Section
Chicago	121 North State Street
Chicago	St. Benet Library & Book Shop
Chicago	39 East Congress Street
Cincinnati	The Thomas More Library and Book Shop
Cincinnati	220 West Madison Street
Cincinnati	Benziger Bros., Inc.
Cincinnati	129 Main Street
Cleveland	Frederick Poster Company, Inc.
Cleveland	436 Main Street
Cleveland	Catholic Book Store
Cleveland	703 N.B.C. Building
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Dallas	2067 East 9 Street
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Detroit	1636 Tremont Street
Detroit	E. J. McDevitt Company
Detroit	1234 Washington Boulevard
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Hartford	435 Main Street
Hartford	The Book Mart
Hartford	Ninth and Peach Streets
Hartford	Catholic Lending Library of Hartford, Inc.
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Houston	Catholic Lending Library
Houston	94 Suffolk Street
Houston	A. J. Hill
Kansas City	1215 Fannin Street
Kansas City	Catholic Community Library
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San Antonio	Catholic Book & Church Supply Co.
San Francisco	314 S. W. Washington Street
San Francisco	The Marion Book Shop and Lending Library
San Francisco	63 Washington Street
Seattle	Trant's, Inc.
Seattle	96 Clinton Avenue No.
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Seattle	413-417 Sibley Street
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Any book mentioned in AMERICA's Book-Log, whether one of the current best-selling ten, one of more permanent value or one of club selection, may be ordered by sending this coupon to any of the stores listed above. Note that the price indicated is the retail price; club members obtain their books at a discount from their respective clubs

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## Books of Lasting Value

C. F. Horan & Co., of Los Angeles, California, selects as its choice of the ten currently available books which have proved over the years to be of most lasting value, the books listed below. The roster of reporting stores gives the ten books that are popular month by month; this individual report spots books of permanent interest.

The asterisk indicates that the book has appeared in the Book-Log's monthly report.

1. A Companion to the Summa\*  
Walter Farrell, O.P.  
Sheed and Ward
2. Imitation of Christ  
Thomas à Kempis  
Bruce
3. St. Therese of Lisieux  
T. N. Taylor (translated by)  
Kenedy
4. The New Testament\*  
Ronald A. Knox  
Sheed and Ward
5. Teresa of Avila\*  
William Thomas Walsh  
Bruce
6. The Confessions of St. Augustine  
F. J. Sheed (translated by)  
Sheed and Ward
7. The Public Life of Our Lord  
Alban Goodier, S.J.  
Kenedy
8. A Woman Wrapped in Silence\*  
John W. Lynch  
Macmillan
9. Spiritual Life  
Adolph Tanqueray  
Newman Bookshop
10. Mr. Blue  
Myles Connolly  
Macmillan

## CLUB SELECTIONS FOR DECEMBER

**The Catholic Book Club:**  
The Snob and the Saint  
Sister Frances Teresa  
The Mosher Press. \$2

**The Spiritual Book Associates:**  
The Christ of Catholicism  
Dom Adred Graham  
Longmans. \$4  
(November-December Selection)

## Catholic Children's Book Club:

**PICTURE BOOK GROUP:**  
Lizbeth Ann's Goat  
Mary Virginia Provines  
Viking. \$2

## INTERMEDIATE GROUP:

Always Reddy  
Marguerite Henry and Wesley Dennis  
Whittlesey. \$1.75

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland  
Lewis Carroll  
Whittlesey. \$1.25

## OLDER BOYS:

Mountain Pony and the Pinto Colt  
Henry V. Larom  
Whittlesey. \$2

## OLDER GIRLS:

Title to Happiness  
Adele de Leeuw  
Macmillan. \$2.50



**THE HIGH WALL.** In what may be MGM's answer to *Spellbound* or a warm-up session for the forthcoming *Snake Pit*, Robert Taylor plays a veteran given to mental blackouts. Since one of them occurs when he has his hands around the throat of his faithless wife and he revives to find her strangled, his guilt seems a foregone conclusion, and before you can say "narco-synthesis" the police haul him off to the psychiatric ward for sanity tests. A brain operation and a beautiful psychiatrist (Audrey Totter) restore his morale, while the appearance of a fresh suspect for the murder turns him into a human dynamo who eludes the assembled forces of law and order in a successful campaign to clear his name. This is standard *adult* melodrama. (MGM)

**DAISY KENYON.** This unsavory slice of modern life, which turns out to have no discernible point, had the makings of a good social satire. Its three chief characters ring uncomfortably true. They are a capable but neurotic career girl (Joan Crawford), who wants desperately to feel that someone needs her, and two leading candidates for that position—a magnetic corporation lawyer (Dana Andrews), who started up the ladder of success by marrying the boss' daughter but who doesn't let that interfere with his other pursuits, and a laconic ex-GI (Henry Fonda) with a few private ghosts of his own, who marries the girl after a whirlwind courtship because both think it "might be worth a try." Boasting able performances, some very good dialog in the modern idiom and a reasonable ability to portray mixed motives, the film could have achieved a wholesomely antiseptic effect. What it lacks is a point of view outside the minds of its unprincipled leads, which would give focus and significance. (Twentieth Century-Fox)

**PIRATES OF MONTEREY.** The buccaneers mentioned in the title—who are the shock troops for a conspiracy to restore pre-gold-rush California to the Spanish crown—remain off the screen for a good nine-tenths of the picture and are put tamely to rout by the militia. This dearth of action in a purportedly rip-roaring adventure story places an undue strain on the performers, Maria Montez, Rod Cameron and Philip Reed, whose chief community asset is an appearance as handsome as the Technicolor scenery. (Universal-International) MOIRA WALSH

## Theatre

**THE GENTLEMAN FROM ATHENS.** There must be something in the air out Hollywood way that gives authors delusions of grandeur and a sense of mission to save the world from war, pestilence, poverty, athlete's foot, the atom bomb and Senator Taft. Earlier in the season, Donald Ogden Stewart assured us, in *How I Wonder*, that the world is going to hell in a hurry and that the only way to halt our downhill slide into the bonfire is for "free" intellectuals to assert themselves and stand up to the reactionaries. Then Emmet Lavery came out of the West with an apocalyptic vision of horrors to come. His leading female character, after investing her last thousand bucks in a tour of Europe—on the near side of the Iron Curtain, I assume—returned home all upset about the state of the world and bumped into a freshman Congressman with a sure-fire plan for saving the world.

The Congressman, Hon. Stephen Socrates Christopher, from California, in a moment of inspiration decided that the one way to insure permanent peace, and perhaps permanent prosperity, was to change the United Nations into The United States of the World. To start the ball rolling, he introduced a bill intended to put Congress on record behind his idea. His bill, for reasons easy to understand, got hung up in committee; and Mr. Lavery guided the action in a direction suggesting that the common people, the whole world over, want peace, while their statesmen are leading them toward war. A fact that is ignored by Mr. Lavery, and other serious thinkers, is that the inertia of the common people is as much to blame for the parlous state of civilization as the pettifoggery of politicians.

It may be faint praise to affirm that *The Gentleman from Athens*, for all its fuzzy thinking, was more intelligible than Mr. Stewart's *How I Wonder*. For one thing, while the play was not serious enough for comedy and lacked the bounce and slapstick of farce, it was rich in mature humor. His characters frequently delivered lines that made more sense than their author's central theme, and at the heart of the play there was a solid core of Christian ethics.

Anthony Quinn, the Congressman, and Edith Atwater, the girl with war nerves, were capable in their roles, al-

though I have seen Miss Atwater in better form. Secondary roles, with one exception, were performed with routine competence. The exception was Ethel Browning, cast as an ancient spinster, who came up with a sparkling performance. The producer, if you are interested, was Martin Gosch, in association with Eunice Healy; and Ralph Alswang designed the old Virginia drawing-room which George Washington frequently visited.

Aside from production deficiencies, Mr. Lavery was his play's worst enemy. It is hard to believe *The Gentleman from Athens* was written by the same man who wrote *The Magnificent Yankee* and had a hand in shaping *Seven Mirrors* for production. Nevertheless, I enjoyed the social gaucheries and ideological antics of *The Gentleman from Athens*, and my companion thought the play was just grand. It happens that she is an Anthony Quinn addict.

THEOPHILUS LEWIS

## Parade

(AS BILL, A TAXI DRIVER, STEERS his empty cab through the traffic, a prospective fare hails him.)

*Fare* (after announcing his destination): Step on it, driver. I got to pick up some shepherds in a hurry.

*Bill*: Shepherds? I don't get it. What's it—a gag?

*Fare*: For the Christmas Crib at St. Gabriel's. I'm sexton there. If it was left to me, I'd skip the shepherds. They ain't important.

*Bill*: They ain't big-name people, that's right; but when them angels ask God: "Who shall we invite over to the cave?" He don't say: "Get some big names in there"; He says: "Invite them shepherds." Maybe big names don't mean nothing to Him or anyway, as much as they do to us.

*Sexton*: Maybe you're right. Anyway, here we are. (Cab stops at religious-article store. In a few minutes it is filled with shepherds, and heading for St. Gabriel's.)

*Bill*: Mister, I sure would have liked to be one of them shepherds that first Christmas night. You know what I mean—seeing them angels, walking over to that cave.

*Sexton*: But you'd be dead for a long time.

*Bill*: I ain't denying that, but look

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where I'd be. Instead of driving these plaster shepherds, I'd be up there talking to them real shepherds right now. And something else. I would have seen God in that cave. (Cab stops at St. Gabriel's. After helping the sexton place the statues in the crib, Bill kneels down and gazes reverently at the figures of the Infant Christ, the Blessed Mother, St. Joseph. After a time, he leaves the church, drives back to his corner stand. . . . Louie, another taximan, steps into his cab for a chat.)

**Bill:** Louie, while I'm looking at the crib at St. Gabriel's, a new angle on that cave hits me.

**Louie:** What is this new angle that hits you?

**Bill:** In this cave, God is coming to earth. This is the greatest thing ever. Now, you'd think there's be some big names of the time in that cave, wouldn't you?

**Louie:** Yeah, you sure would, for a fact.

**Bill:** Well, there ain't. God comes to the cave, and there ain't any of the world's big names to greet him. Not even one.

**Louie:** I ain't never thought of it like this before. It certainly is a screwy business, ain't it?

**Bill:** It's a dizzy set-up, Louie. The world's big guys don't know this Infant is God, and the world's little guys do know it. The shepherds is nobodies, but they know who the Infant is, and who the lady and the man in the cave are.

**Louie:** I'd rather be one of the shepherds.

**Bill:** And it's the same this Christmas like it was the first Christmas. In this here year 1947, how many big names know who the Infant is, who His Mother is? From all I hear, very few, Louie. And do the little-name people know this? Yeah, millions and millions of them.

**Louie:** Why is this, Bill?

**Bill:** My guess is the big guys don't want to know. They kid themselves the Infant ain't God. Most big shots blow themselves up into believing they're bigger'n God. They don't want even the Infant telling them what to do or what not to do.

**Louie:** It's dizzy. There ain't no doubt about it.

**Bill:** I'll say. Louie, you and me are like the shepherds. We're nobodies, but we know what lots of somebodies don't know. We know that Infant in the cave is really God Almighty.

JOHN A. TOOMEY

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# Correspondence

## Picnic policy

EDITOR: In "I went to a Communist picnic" in *AMERICA* (November 1), Fr. Parsons gave us his impressions of one of the Communists' activities. Lest any of *AMERICA*'s readers conclude that their actions are limited to the bourgeois, here are two experiences that happened to me in the course of my travels to Europe during this past summer.

I traveled over on one of the student ships run under State Department auspices, which carried close to a thousand American college students abroad. About 125 of these were on their way to the World Youth Festival at Prague, which everyone knew to be a communist-inspired and -planned affair. Most of these American students either were members of the Party or warm sympathizers. They were extremely well organized and were out to influence the rest on board. They were an alert, active, and hard-working group who organized discussions, led the entertainments and were influential on the ship's paper. They cleverly disposed everyone to be friendly toward them, and subtly put over many of their points. This was anything but a picnic for them; they were out to influence their fellow students and worked night and day to do it.

The second experience happened in Paris—as did Fr. Parsons'. One afternoon I was walking through the Louvre when a young fellow began a conversation with me and became quite friendly. He spoke good English, and I discovered he was from Russia. It turned out that he was attached to the Russian Consulate in Paris. He invited me to dinner at the Russian Consulate that night and, like Fr. Parsons, I, too, went without being dressed *en clergyman*. There I met several other young and personable Russians who spoke English and who talked a great deal about America—our country, not this magazine! One was coming to the States to study engineering; another was coming next spring for a sail-boat regatta; and my friend was expecting to come to the embassy in Washington. They went out of their way to be friendly, which was their first step in the conquest they hoped for.

Just from these two personal experi-

ences it was evident that the Comrades are busy in all spheres and not just concerned with the bourgeois. If only we, Catholics, had some of their initiative and zeal, what wonders might befall the Church!

JOHN N. BROOKS

Dunwoodie, N. Y.

## Mr. Blanchard objects

EDITOR: I appreciate the advertising which Father Gardiner gave me in your issue of December 6, but I was somewhat surprised at the tone of his article because I had learned to think of Jesuits as urbane gentlemen who do not sputter. Your readers may draw their own conclusions from the fact that Father Gardiner concentrated on the manner of my articles rather than their matter, did not produce any documentary material to refute my detailed and documented statements, and admitted himself that his article was "not a refutation."

Father Gardiner did three things in his article—rather well, I thought: 1) attacked the method of presentation of my three articles in the *Nation*; 2) denied some of my facts without substantiating his denials, on the assumption, I suppose, that Catholic readers would accept his denials without proof; and 3) sprinkled personal innuendos through the article.

In reply to his first point, I ask the readers of *AMERICA* who have not already read the three articles in the *Nation* to get them and judge for themselves whether I used a smear technique or a sober factual method.

In reply to Father Gardiner's denials, I should like to debate the three articles in the *Nation* and those denials face to face with Father Gardiner or any other editor of *AMERICA*, and I am willing to pay my own expenses from Vermont and appear in a Catholic hall in New York for the benefit of Catholic charities if a neutral chairman can be provided and the tickets are evenly divided between *AMERICA* and the *Nation* readers.

As to the third point, the personal innuendos, I hate to disappoint Father Gardiner who apparently shares the conventional hope that all critics of the hierarchy can be tarred with the communist brush, but 1) I have never

been caught belonging to a communist-front organization; 2) my superiors in the State Department forgot to purge me and even asked me to stay longer; 3) I frequently agree with *AMERICA* in its opposition to Stalin and Molotov, even when I disagree with the reasons; 4) my political affiliations and sympathies have been with the right wing of the American Labor Party and with the Liberal Party, and I was chairman of the party's primary committee which defeated the communist-controlled faction in 1939; 5) Father Gardiner should not be quite so incredulous about my finding "time to become a pundit in all these sober sciences" while serving in public office because I was born in a parsonage and, in a distant interlude of my youth, I actually studied enough theology at two leading American seminaries to be ordained.

PAUL BLANCHARD

Thetford Center, Vermont

*[Far from attempting any innuendo that Mr. Blanchard leans to communism, Father Gardiner was at pains to show how unjustified such an innuendo would be. The fact that Mr. Blanchard believes that he has thus been placed under suspicion seems to show that he has been deceived by his own technique. As for the invitation to a debate, we could not consider it, since the tone of Mr. Blanchard's articles did not inspire in us any great confidence in his good faith.—EDITOR]*

## For orphans

EDITOR: In the article "Our occupation community in Germany" (November 29), mention was made of "Orphans, Incorporated," whose honorary director is Mrs. Clarence R. Huebner, wife of the Commanding General, Headquarters, European Command. This group of women of the occupation community endeavors to care for the poor, needy and undernourished orphans in and around the Frankfurt area. Twenty-one orphanages containing approximately 1,500 children are involved. Canned milk and cereals, coal, powdered dextrose, cod-liver oil and Ovaltine are prized items. Wool is reknitted, shoes are repaired.

The mailing address: Lt. Colonel Joseph F. Webb, Director, Orphans, Incorporated, Hq. EUCOM c/o Deputy Budget and Fiscal Director, APO No. 757, c/o Postmaster, New York, N. Y.

ROBERT A. GRAHAM, S.J.

New York, N. Y.



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